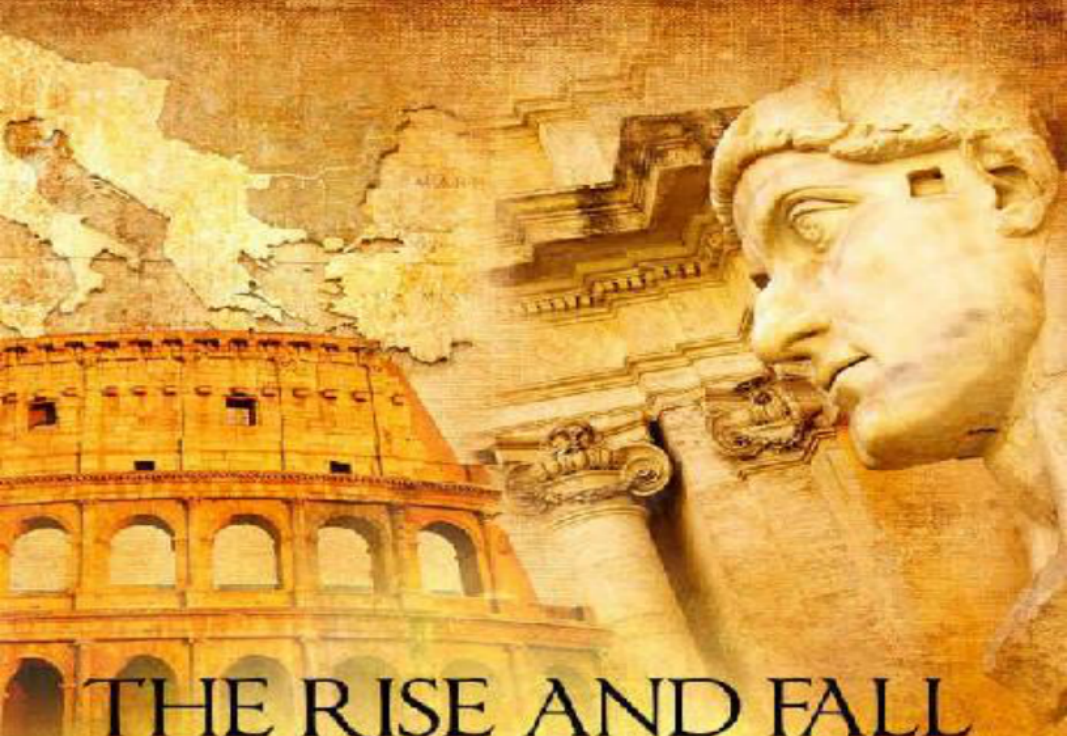


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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE CLASHES OF KINGS AND EMPERORS
CLAIMING THE CROWN

MICHAEL KLEIN

The Rise and Fall of The Roman Empire -The Clashes of Kings and Emperors Claiming The Crown

By Michael Klein

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Introduction

You might have decided to hide that secret stash of history books in case someone comes over and quizzes you about the key differences between the Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire. They might start a debate about whether the United States can be considered an empire of the likes that the Romans built. It's also possible you proudly display some of the books you've read hoping that one day someone *will* strike up that conversation about the lost legions or clashes between Rome and Judea. In the course of the discussion, even in the preludes, you may find that your dialogue covers certain takeaways about the Roman Empire. You might even notice that the person you're having a conversation with has a romantic view of the Roman dream, embracing their thirst for triumph, majesty, and the honorable Roman 'thing to do' in many situations.

Maybe your debating sparring partner starts demonstrating feats of showmanship like a gladiator mercilessly dragging an opponent around an imaginary arena. Or they might wonder what it would have been like for Marc Anthony at the moment he realized during the Ides of March that he failed to warn Caesar in time about the fateful plot to kill him. Or maybe they heard about some of the famous battles like the Punic Wars fought between Carthage and Rome before Rome even established itself as an empire. They might delight in how Hannibal would stop at nothing in his campaign of vengeance and how the Romans finally defeated the Carthaginians. They might know about the rape of Lucretia or about the first triumvirate. They may mention the Gallic Wars or know about Caesar's bitter rivalry with Pompey the Great and the crossing of the Rubicon. They might mention the fierce raids by the Goths and other tribes from the Danube and Rhine.

Yet do they consider how Roman virtues and moralities around social issues and the debates and conflicts of specific times along their

vast history shaped their world and how they changed over time? In considering the entire Roman Empire, it can seem difficult to find any other common threads besides Christianity. The formation of the Holy Roman Empire is also often raised, but what led to the rifts? Why do we often hear about the Germanic tribes rather than the Kings of the Franks who allied with the Pope in a time of need when the Roman Empire didn't help? It makes us wonder if alliances drew the ancient world together or if it depended on the way that it was presented to the Roman people who were often guided by an unwritten complex code of customs founded on the quality of *fides* and *mos maiorum*. Consensus and moderation was required in the preservation of their *mos maiorum*, which evolved over time. Honor was considered the fire in their bones. Yet the Romans have been described also as not easy to grasp since they did not idealize so much as transform and in so doing may be seen in contradictory fashions that captivate us.

There are various misconceptions about the Roman Empire. For one, Rome simply imposed its will everywhere culturally in a desperate machine-like imperialism and redesigned or eradicated local traditions in Romanisation efforts. They converted people to Roman Catholicism with much urgency during the Holy Roman Empire, but this was not characteristic during different historical periods. Another is that Rome simply molded the world to its own purposes. This ignores all the grey area. What about interrelations that existed and developed or severed relationships with the changing priorities of *Romanness*, the identity we will explore in this book, over time? If the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in 476 CE held such high importance to the future of the British Empire and to the story of Europe, then why have some believed the misconception that a Dark Ages followed the fall of the Western Roman Empire? Out of the ashes of the empire that was often highly influenced by the Church and reinforced the importance of the State over the individual came a European embrace of freedom in the early development of the countries we see today.

Many have read about the Roman Empire and often haven't

questioned various claims. Was the Holy Roman Empire truly established on the will of one man (King of the Franks Charlemagne) and lacked no solid foundation? How did estrangement between the Papacy and the Byzantine Empire, which established itself in 300 CE before the fall of the Western Roman Empire and endured until 1453, end up in the East-West Schism? Did Napoleon destroy the precursor to modern Germany and Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, in 1806 to appropriate its legacy or to destroy its significance? Finally, how did Cicero, as Thomas Jefferson explicitly named as one of the handful of major figures who contributed to a tradition of public right that informed the United States Declaration of Independence, influence and describe the Roman Empire?

Rome has often been portrayed as a symbol of a success story or the symbol of a unifying force. In working through these inquiries, representations and misconceptions in these pages, the underlying idea of a certain *Romanness* will emerge as a way to consider what made Romans Roman, just as we might wonder today at what makes an American identity. Was their patriarchal society geared from the start toward an aggressive ideal that held them in perpetuity until it lost favor with those who ultimately resisted it successfully moving history in a direction that would grow conceptually to embrace new identities and ideals? How did their identity unify the Romans and sometimes tear them apart? Did the very common models of behavior that Roman ruling classes and patricians promoted shift over the extensive history of the Roman Empire leading to what unified the Romans and periodically tore them apart?

It did and this explains often why we are fascinated with the Romans. The lingering impact that the Roman Empire has on those who like to draw parallels between America and Rome or those who want to memorialize the glory of the Roman times may have more to do with a need to align with dominant powers of another time and to prevent a recurrence in suffering their fate. Despite how often the parallels are made and refuted, America and Rome as dominant powers are often seen as suffering from moral decay and beholden to

hubris and pride. While the nature of American and Roman global influence may differ, this book will not so much answer the question whether the Romans were a version of ourselves, but instead acknowledge the debate and focus, just as today we see people grapple with how an unfolding identity occurs despite history marching on politically and militarily in America, how we might develop a better understanding of what unified them and what had the potential of tearing them apart as we explore different periods of their history.

One of the most significant factors that colors our ability to look at the Roman Empire separately from the dominant superpower status of America is that many who look to the Roman Empire for answers do so with an emotional attachment to a perceived assumption that by noticing similarities between the two, then one is fearful of how 'being like Rome' may impact our own lives. If they fell, then we can. That proves difficult to remove from the mind if we only look at the Roman Empire from that perspective. Since it is uncomfortable to consider that an empire can fall, then we might not see what unified and tore them apart as separate from our own modern day experiences.

America adopted many concepts about government and institutions from the Roman Empire including the Roman term Senate, although our methods of selecting Senators vary from theirs. From ancient thinkers who have generously influenced political thought, like the Greek historian and statesman Polybius (c. 204-122 BCE), the founding fathers of America learned some early clues about the importance of separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism. From the Roman statesman and scholar Cicero (106-43 BCE), they learned the importance of personal liberty, service to one's community as an individual's highest purpose, and how rule of law could protect natural rights. He was a devoted defender of the *mos maiorum*. Cicero was a trial lawyer and the tradition of lawyers defending clients is considered to be of Roman origin.

More will be discussed about the influence of these thinkers on

political institutions and political mechanisms. However, one major influence that Cicero conveyed is his appreciation of the possibility that an individual could belong to several social and political groups simultaneously and that loyalties didn't need to stand in conflict with each other in a hierarchy of allegiances. Rome is seen as having become powerful because it united many groups and members who still belonged to various groups but could appreciate their *Romanness* on the basis of a common citizenship and identify Roman common interests. A common set of values developed based on inclusiveness of diverse cultures, where they absorbed the religions and gods and cults of conquered nations to integrate them into their vision of their vast empire and provide for them opportunities to continue with their own traditions. They developed the possibility of social mobility that united them, in a society that prided itself on class distinctions and perpetuated a traditionally hierarchical social censure.

However, again, as many studies and historical accounts prove, time and again empires fall. Although humans can gain from previous models in so many fashions, as many superpowers have borrowed from powerful Republics and Empires throughout time, there is no formula to follow on how to prevent a fall. As the saying goes, only time will tell. In studying the Roman Republic and Empire, readers instead can deepen their understanding of the Romans instead of interpret their historical timeline only as the model it has been used as, both successfully and perilously.

Chapter 1 Becoming Roman: The Early Years: Regal, a Republic and Through the Transition

Finding common traits in the early years requires considering how the Romans thought of themselves to begin with. The Romans founded Rome in 753 BCE. Public testaments of one's virtues seem to permeate even their earliest historical accounts during the tumult of the early regal times. Before we consider how the seven kings that ruled Rome before the establishment of the Republic demonstrated their *virtus* and how women could become the portraits of a lady by Roman standards, often depicted by the Roman goddess *Pudicitia* as the personification of chaste modesty, let's start at their beginning. Although several legends have developed about Rome's uncertain beginnings, one that has withstood the test of time is the story of how the twin brothers Romulus and Remus founded the city.

The legend describes how Ascanius founded the city Alba Longa ("Long White City") twelve miles southeast of the hill that would eventually become Rome. The importance of Ascanius is two-fold. First, as the son of the hero Aeneas (son of the goddess Venus), he was also called Iulus or Julius and through him the family of Julius Caesar traced its descent. Secondly, and more in the hopes of emphasizing the importance of the legend of Romulus and Remus, since Alba Longa led the Latium (the Latin Confederation of numerous city-states) for 300 years, his descendants lead us to the beginning of the legend of the twin brothers and their birth. One of Ascanius' descendants, Rhea Silvia, who was made a Vestal Virgin by her uncle King Amulius, was visited by the war god Mars. She bore twin sons. Amulius, who had taken the throne at Alba Longa from his brother Numitor, didn't know who the father of the twins was. Consequently, he ordered that the twin boys be thrown in the Tiber River to drown. The legend tells that despite Amulius attempting to secure his own interests after deposing Numitor and preventing Rhea Silvia from birthing any potential political rivals, the twin boys did not drown.

Since his servants didn't have the heart to drown them, they abandoned the boys on the riverbank left to the fate that the river may deliver. They washed up on shore at the foot of the Palatine Hill, where Rome would one day stand proudly. A she-wolf rescued the twins when she was drawn to the river to quench her thirst. According to some accounts, Mars sent the she-wolf since the wolf is sacred to the god of war. She nursed them until Amulius's herdsman Faustulus found the babies and took them from the beast. Acca Larentia, his wife, raised them. They eventually killed their evil uncle Amulius and reinstated their grandfather Numitor to the throne at Alba Longa. The brothers decided to start their own city. In all of the planning of where to start the city and who would win, they fought and Romulus killed Remus. He built Rome, at Palatine Hill, naming it after himself.

While there are many interpretations surrounding the legend that led to the twin brothers and the foundation of Rome, it is worth considering it the way that the Romans did. The wolf is a protector of Rome and nurtures the twins who are lucky when they encounter the wolf. Although the wolf to others may represent a fierce wicked wild beast, in the story that led to the foundation of Rome, mercy toward the needy twins who had become victims to merciless sibling rivalry led to a new life out of a likely death. Like the origin legend of Rome suggests, greatness can rise because the maternal compassion of the wolf can overcome the ill-will cast by those who perceive Rome as a threat or in a battle of wills is willing to let it die. Human nature is questioned as the wolf's instinct to protect subsumes all other instincts and protects the possibility of a future being established on new grounds, despite no longer having a cultural or blood line to rely on in building one's *Romanness*. Then, *Romanness* starts in chaos and could be created based not on traditional inheritance or depending on humans to act virtuously, but required divine intervention. In addition, given that Rome proved in the future to become united under a single power and led to several attempts to repeat the process, the legend seems to also lead to an understanding of a type of *Romanness* we can trace to the very legends that the Romans spread about their past that filled them with a sense of identity and defined

their character. This identity that they built became entangled with others right from the start.

It becomes clear that one of the things that unified the Romans was their collective stories that helped them develop a concept of themselves and their evolving civilization that fostered many of the characteristics that led to their demands and sense of decorum. Stories helped them express admiration and preserve their own self-made lives and go on with the show under stress, knowing that enemies lurked beyond the Roman walls with their hands close to the neck of their swords unwhimpering, but honoring their obligations as Roman citizens to obtain public esteem.

While Romulus is considered possibly the first king of Rome (753-716 BCE), the second king of the seven who served Rome before it became a Republic also provides us with a variety of insights into the nature of *Romanness*. While accounts about Romulus seem to suggest that he opened Rome as an asylum to all fugitives from neighboring peoples, which increased Rome's population, the king that succeeded him tamed the warlike Roman mobs with a religious refoundation of Rome. Notions of *virtus* and *pudicitia* as characteristic qualities of Roman men and women invariably last throughout the ages and it would be difficult to trace those qualities then to Romulus, but in our pursuit we gain some insight in his successor. King Numa Pompilius (715-673 BCE) is noted to have been associated with the virtue and peacefulness that characterized the Golden Age. Historians attribute the formation of many of the rituals that were institutionalized as Roman traditions to Numa. During the Golden Age under the future Emperors Trajan (98-177 CE) and Hadrian (117-138 CE), Hadrian is known to have revered the past so intensely that his piousness compared to Numa Pompilius and hoped to be his equal.

Numa has been represented as the founder of all the great early Roman religious institution. The founder of the Roman Empire, Augustus (Octavian) (63 BCE-14 CE) as arbiter of expected Roman mores incarnated the qualities of Numa and Romulus. During his reign, there was a period of uninterrupted peace and the population

was said to be peacefully pursuing agriculture and worship of the gods. The Roman statesman Cicero later described Numa as preeminent in the qualities of virtue and wisdom. According to the Greek historian Plutarch, he rejected any extravagance and contemplated on nature and power in service to the gods. He divided all the land that Romulus won in conquest and shared it with each citizen. He led the people by showing them they didn't need to resort to war and pillaging to achieve an abundance and sowed the seeds of tranquility rather than hostility. By establishing the worship of certain deities like Mars, Jupiter, Vesta and Fides (Good Faith), he set the stage for establishing priesthoods, temples and rituals.

The Romans inherited religious laws and several accounts suggest that the Numa tradition served as an example of their ancestors in times of Roman crisis. Although certain practices began to take shape under the Tarquin dynasty of kings, like sacrifice, these were not intrinsic to Latin practices based in Numa's traditions. Several times under Emperors, Numa's Traditions were upheld as the most pious for the City to follow as needed reforms when rulers had moved toward excesses that moved away from family, the earth, and being in service to their communities and gods. While his laws required strict adherence, they are often referred to as the purest form of Roman religion and vital to the creation of the Roman psyche. The creation of the institution of the Vestal Virgins and their eternal flame, which lasted until the Empire fell in the fifth century CE, is attributed to him. Although, the cult of the goddess Vesta and the tradition of the Vestal Virgins preceded his institutionalizing it in Roman life. Vesta as a goddess was to symbolize Rome and its people as the hearth and heart. Historians have made the analogy that an appeal to Vesta is similar to how one cannot abandon Rome.

Once again, in discussing the abandonment of Rome and the impossibility of committing such an act, one cannot help but think of the origin story of Rome and the abandonment of the twins that eventually led to the formation of Rome. Her unpenetrated body represented the impenetrable walls of Rome.

Numa's successor Tullius Hostilius engaged in perpetual wars with his neighbors. The Roman historian Livy condemned King Hostilius's justification of punishment of the Alban leader Mettius Fufetius as disregarding the laws of *humanitas* when the king had him torn apart by two chariots going in opposite directions for having been torn about fulfilling his obligations and waiting for a battle's outcome. As far as the historical context, *humanitas* became a key concept for *Romanness* during the first century BCE. That begs the question whether the early kings advertised their *civilitas* (their sense of civic virtue) and reinforced any precursors to *humanitas* as a basic *Romanness*. The next king, Ancus Marcius (640-616 BCE) was by character more like his grandfather and revived interest in religious practices. He developed the concept of just and unjust wars and reformed how prisoners were treated, since before his request to build the first prison in Rome, prisoners were exiled. He preceded the Etruscan kings, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus (Tarquin the Elder), Servius Tullius, and despotic tyrannical Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud).

These three kings have been considered by many historians to be the beginning of a turning point in the regal period. Some historians suggest that the Tarquins represented an end to a Latin-Sabine period and the start of the Etruscan phase. More than that, some historians have also looked at how these Etruscans should be credited for making Rome into a city, while others consider that it obscures the study of archaic Rome. Each of their contributions to Roman society is varied and reveals much about the leaders and the needs of the Romans while the debate about the length of their rule, whether there were other unmentioned kings and the chronology is fascinating.

However, for the purposes of considering the effect they had on building a certain *Romanness*, it's worth considering some of the hallmarks of their times. While several histories consider that the Tarquin dynasty put ancient Roman history more firmly on solid ground of history rather than earlier legends, the fact that the

Etruscans, traditionally in a state of war with Latium, were now increasing their power has been further explored. While the first of the three, Tarquin the Elder brought the region of Latium under Roman control and the second, Servius had started the census, the Tarquin dynasty's dreams of making their domination last ended with a popular uprising under the cruel legendary seventh and final king of Rome Superbus. Rome would no longer be ruled by kings.

What led to the overthrow of the monarchy in 510 BCE? Although a Senate did exist from the times of Romulus, it had little power or authority given the absolute power of the monarch. According to a prevalent account, Lucius Junius Brutus led a revolt against Superbus after his son raped a patrician Roman named Lucretia. As the founder of the Roman Republic, he is remembered as bringing the origin of liberty to Rome by the Roman history Livy. By imposing a one-year limit on the two consuls that replaced the role of the king, it provided the people a chance to hold those in power in check after the wide-scale abuses under Tarquin the Proud. The distribution of power started here would forever remain an important criteria to Romans who wanted better guarantees of their freedoms. While it is easy to suggest that becoming Roman at this time in their history meant a certain anti-monarchism, this would not altogether be true given that many future Roman leaders and citizens would turn back to the works and contributions of previous kings.

Rather, it is more likely that the times led to an outright need to remove tyranny from the system. This, while suggesting that *libertas* was the top priority from this point on for Romans, may not mean as much as the starting of a tradition of checking the system when any part of it showed tyranny or an abuse of power. As we see throughout the history of the Roman civilization, there were continued checks on the Senate, oligarchs, future Roman rulers and patricians. Brutus and Lucretia's husband Tarquinius Collatinus became the first consuls. It has also been suggested in historical accounts that nobles overthrew the monarchy since they were experiencing a loss of power under the reigns of the last two kings and they wanted to maintain their power.

Despite the shift to a republic, what would quickly reemerge was that search to root out abuses of power that became central to the Roman way of life during this period. Within the first year of the establishment of the republic, patricians and plebeians began a conflict over power, state protections and rights. The conflict lasted for two hundred years. In 494 BCE, it led to the threat of withdrawal of plebeians from the republic's military service and a physical withdrawal from Rome leaving patricians to realize that they could not alone defend Rome. It forced them into a compromise. A Council of Plebes was created in 474 BCE and tribunes for the plebeians were instituted. Although it remains an open question whether to consider it an oversimplification and overdramatization of the ancient sources to say that there was a sharp patrician-plebeian dichotomy, there is still a lot of evidence that supports why people had reason to protest and demand changes from the patricians who governed over loans, harsh debt laws, and hardships on the poor classes.

The *plebs* developed their own independent political force from 500 BCE to 400 BCE and voting rights were extended into rural areas in areas where more people who depended on for military service resided. The tribunes protected ordinary citizens from excessive military service. The tribunes basically protected the *plebs* interests against abuses of power and official acts that were detrimental to the *plebs*. In particular, one of the sources of discontent stemmed from patricians and priests exercising greater control over the laws that appeared to disproportionately weigh unfairly against the *plebs*. The laws were eventually codified winning victoriously for the rule of law and legal archives recorded for the future. What led up to 287 BCE when the popular assembly decisions no longer just pertained to plebeians internal affairs but rather equally to patricians and plebeians alike, was a long time coming, but eventually integrated plebeians into the political fold. Nobles and patricians rarely broke rank even given the reforms.

What we see in the development of becoming Roman is justice, evolving civic thoughts, and consensus. As Roman power grew, all

Latins enjoyed the rights associated with Roman citizenship. In fact, it is one of the highlights of Roman power that has been recognized for moving all citizens in subjugated cities to full Roman rights. While these tribes kept local authorities, customs and territory, their allegiance was to Rome. Citizenship was an integration tool of conquered people. However oversimplified the integration processes have been in historical accounts, what is important is to consider some of the ways that Romans developed their own culture, values and virtues and how these changed over time. Rome was already considered an economic superpower since internal growth and free trade formed their economy. It wasn't until 387 BCE when the Celts of Gaul sacked Rome that Rome developed its military and expanded its territory. Only one hundred and twenty years later at the start of the Punic Wars, warfare could be seen as a uniting force in Roman society.

Before the creation of the Roman Empire under Emperor Augustus (Octavian) in 27 BCE and Marc Antony's pivotal role in Rome's transition from Republic to Empire, the Republic would embark on restructuring their form of governance. They created the office of praetor in 366 BCE in charge of matters of equity that applied to Roman citizens and one in 242 BCE that handled any suits between parties that were foreigners. Consuls acted as the immediate replacements of the kings offering the Romans continuity. Since the Senate took most of the power as they nominated the two consuls, the tribunes were intended to counter the authority of the two consuls. Their treasury grew from military campaigns, free trade, and private property.

It's valuable to stop and note a very key element of what is considered *Romanness* and emerges throughout the study of the Roman monarchies, the Republic and deep into their empires. Consider for a minute how Roman tradition has been written about. Roman tradition highlights that the system developed through the contribution of many generations and that they cannot see one legislator as the sole creator of what made Rome continue. As

mentioned in earlier pages, the very origin story of Rome seems to suggest that the very Roman spirit or the *raison d'être* may be that there is the possibility for the change for the better, even from disaster. Polybius (200-118 BCE) framed the Romans as having arrived at the same results as the Spartans did in establishing a constitution, but he made a distinction and it is a very important distinction for us to consider. The Romans had not arrived there through abstract reasoning, but through struggles, difficulties and by adopting reforms continuously based on knowledge gained in disasters.

In marking this distinction, it emerges that becoming Roman meant embracing the role of knowledge in the Roman identity and how it was attained. The value of experience in becoming Roman seems to continue to be embraced. It surpassed the ideals that might have been imposed by others who may only wish to see the Roman experience as one doled out by those who studied the Greeks or developed systems of governance in the abstract. It appears that as we explore the open question of what *Romanness* is and became, the evolving nature of the identity could not simply be encapsulated as "not-barbarian."

If at the time of the Republic, the consulate was the focal point of Roman politics, historians have also found that war often became the consul's primary road to riches despite how the spoils of wars were used, the protests, and the costs of wars. Considering the wars with Carthage between 264-133 BCE, which showed how a formidable power could face off with a growing Roman Republic, the struggle for control over the western Mediterranean during these Punic Wars (1st: 264-241 BCE) (2nd: 218-201 BCE) (3rd: 149-146 BCE) cannot be overlooked in the development of a *Romanness*. After fierce battles with Hannibal, as Carthage pursued extending its domains, and Rome's declaration of war, thousands of Romans died before the Carthaginians were pushed back out of Spain and Rome defeated Hannibal. With Spain a province of Rome, Cato wanted complete destruction of Carthage.

Eventually, the territory of Carthage itself was turned into the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis after a third war broke out. As has been described in historical accounts, the increased preoccupation with Spain among the Roman oligarchy can be seen as an explanation of the intermittent nature of Roman interest in the rest of the Mediterranean world. Yet suddenly, given that the Romans were good at expanding, the Roman character seemed to have changed in various historical accounts. It seemed to have hardened after the series of wars and conquered people were treated more harshly.

Was the character of the Republic potentially in danger? If the rise of a middle class, the *equites*, as a result of plebes who had made fortunes at wars, and bitter struggles were beginning to erupt internally, then why did this tear them apart? Why did they ultimately see the collapse of their Republic and the beginning of their empire? Once again, trying to understand what unified the Romans and what tore them apart is informative. Many historians suggest that the Senate had become ineffectual which led to frustrations among Romans, while the growing empire in its conquests of Italy, expansion into western Mediterranean, and domination over Hellenistic kingdoms of eastern Mediterranean, along with the costs and losses from the wars, led to discontent on one level. In terms of accounts that look at the growing political violence that stemmed in the Senate, the growing divide between the two factions, Optimates and Populares, after the destruction of Carthage, turned more violent and did not resolve over time. The divide has been analyzed in terms of whether or not it really did lend itself to tearing the Roman population apart and is still an open question as it resurfaces in studies. Just as well, the agitation that led to Italians losing the Social War (91-88 BCE) but gaining citizenship, for many scholars suggests that Roman aristocrats favored expansion for the glory and economic benefit. However, it is worth noting that on another level, as the Roman conquests progressed, war profits increased in various enterprises that brought new wealth and land to the Republic. By 406 BCE, military pay was introduced and indemnities were owed by defeated enemies to the Roman Republic.

Given the nature of the time, where many states sought to expand their power, it was natural for the Romans to increase their capabilities during the Punic Wars (264 BC-146 BC). The causes of the Punic Wars are often seen as conflicting interests over expansion efforts between the Roman Republic and the Carthaginians, the struggle for control of the island of Sicily, and divided alliances between factions of Messana mercenaries known as the Mamertines (sons of Mars) that drew both powers into a conflict. Messan is in modern day Messina. Yet, what isn't mentioned often in discussions about Roman traditions is the triumphant celebration of military victories.

Characteristically, these were done in grand Roman spectacle. Entering the *porta triumphalis* (a specially designed triumphal gate), the Roman general who had won a decisive defeat of an enemy, would conduct a procession. This triumphal gate on the Campus Martius north of Rome was only the starting point for the jubilee. The general, who rode in a special chariot, led all soldiers, booty, and captives from the war. The general would be dressed as Jupiter and his face painted red imitating the god's statue. The procession would wind its way to the temple of Jupiter beyond Capitoline Hill. The Senate played a very large role as might be expected. They decided whether there would be a procession for every battle fought.

In fact, spectacles became a huge unifier between the republican government and the community at large and became typical. Roman citizens, after the Second Punic War, frequently enjoyed the splendor of these events especially since the impact of events abroad was increasingly influencing Romans at home. It serves as a great reminder of Cicero's claim that an individual could establish a hierarchy of allegiances. Given the increasingly complicated spheres of the Roman experience, citizens and their self-perception could be defined by these encounters with "the other" in the Mediterranean world that was increasingly becoming part of the Roman Republic.

Despite Roman spectacles over triumph, the nature of the schism that a growing economic and social crisis had grooved into the

lives of the Romans in 133 BCE led to the murder of the Gracchus brothers. It is considered, rightfully so, one of the turning points that spoke to the nature of the problems that tore them apart. The signs of the times no longer meant any ease of mind to anyone within the broader population whose grievances were not the concern of the smaller percentage of patricians whose inherited status entitled them to use their power to monopolize public offices and decide political priorities. As mentioned earlier, the conflict between the poorer plebeians — there were rich plebeians as well — and the patricians led to pressures that led to reforms, law codes, and guaranteed greater social mobility and equality in the eyes of the law and society. This belief in fair laws as a protection against social unrest and rulings that suggested that the judges based their decisions on codes not their own interests and wishes united the republic until this latter part of the second century BCE.

These two brothers saw that the decline of the small farmer was the underlying cause of Rome's problems, especially given the rise of the aristocracy. The Senate was extremely powerful at the time, and as the landed aristocracy, they truly represented a small portion of the Roman population. Traditionally, the small farmers were the backbone of the Roman Republic. When small farmers couldn't compete with the wealthier landowners and lost their lands either by buy out or take-over of state-owned land, they drifted to the cities and became the landless poor. The Gracchus brothers tried to fix the matter and bypassed the Senate and had the Council of the Plebeians pass land reform bills that called on the government to reclaim public lands and to redistribute it to the landless Romans. The fury from Senators led to the murder of the reformers.

Civil wars in the first century BCE erupted as a result of power struggles. Prior to the Social War waged from 91-88 BCE, the cities of Italy had been Roman allies for centuries. Some causes of the civil war include the explanation that given that several of the allies had fought side-by-side with Rome in several wars, they wanted Roman citizenship and privileges. The Italians founded their own senate and

became hostile toward Rome. Italians were eventually granted citizenship, which was finally fulfilled in 70 BCE. The First Mithridatic War began in 88 BCE when the Pontic king Mithridates VI ordered the slaughter of Romans living in Asia Minor, which led to 80,000 Romans being butchered.

This tore the Romans apart. Consul Lucius Cornelius Sulla was given authority by the senate to command a war against Mithridates, however the people of Rome opposed the decision, challenged the senate and gave the command to Consul Gaius Marius. In response, the Roman warlord and Consul Sulla marched on Rome and reestablished the authority of the senate (power of privileged families) and restored power over Asia Minor in the name of Rome. Gaius Marius, a successful soldier whose defeats included Gaul, Italy and Africa, served as a Consul for at least seven years which gave him a yet unseen long-term dominance in the Roman political process. Marius was sent packing. When Sulla returned from the East in 83, Consul Marius's supporters were in control, but Sulla had the advantage as a result of his legions' accomplishments. Pompey the Great and Crassus helped him at the Battle of the Colline Gate and in Spain. He became a dictator for three years. Consul Marius once again watched as consul Sulla took Rome. The Gladiator War (73-71 BCE) was the great slave revolt in Italy led by the gladiator Spartacus that was suppressed by Marcus Licinius Crassus. Historians suggest that they took advantage of the civil struggles in Rome and delivered another heavy blow to the Roman social system.

During these tumultuous times and crisis of the Republic, equite (lower aristocratic class) Lucius Sergius Catiline plotted to take over the government after he failed to win in the consular election of 63 BCE. He was thwarted by the consul Marcus Tullius Cicero in his plot and beaten before Catiline's plot in the consular election. Catiline's popularity at the time gave a glimpse into the growing discontent with the Republic. The lack of trial before Catiline was executed has informed many legal discussions and debates ever since. Cicero's role in the Roman Republic and the memory of the Roman

civilization is invariably highly influential as he was so prolific and very involved in a crucial time of their unfolding history.

One of the remarkable things about Cicero was that during his consulship, many of his speeches helped bring a new divinity to Rome as well as speaking on the *virtus* of men. In exploring *Romanness*, it is helpful to consider the shifting ideas of various characteristics and qualities, yet one in particular deserves mention here in connection to Cicero since he too defined the virtues of manhood. *Virtus*, as was generally used in the first century BCE texts and earlier meant a sense of bravery in military contexts carrying connotations of manliness, courage and valor. In the context of a gladiator's world, it was absolutely central to the institution. Cicero's take in one context on *virtus* gave the word less of a moral trait achieved by great fighting men, but an intrinsic omnipresence of a great man who has obtained the highest powers and honors in the high society of Rome. He developed the theory of virtue stating that the four cardinal values were justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance. To Cicero *virtus* was a moral courage also that did not necessitate fear in the face of death, but could as for an orator include courage in the face of shame. He did not have a military background, so to Cicero, *virtus* could be the self-made man. In the same fashion, just as *virtus* was the very model of manliness, *pudicitia* was the very characteristic virtue of the model for an ideal wife or a matron.

As Cicero expanded on Plato's concept of virtues, the honor and shame of Roman women in the Roman Republic were a topic of consideration for many orators and those who valued their social status. Accordingly, in the first century BCE and into the formative years of the empire, elite Roman women valued their *pudicitia* as it affected their social standing and their reputation. Although studies indicate an evolving fluidity to the range of sexual behaviors and general freedoms, elite women could receive harsh sexual critical labels unless her wealth afforded her promiscuity that could be hidden from her reputation or it did not impact her since she was not as vulnerable as others in Roman society. *Pudicitia* and *castitas*,

modesty and purity, were chief virtues of Roman wives and they often competed against each other in making it conspicuous and sometimes to receive official honors. The corona pudicitiae (crown of pudicitia) was awarded publicly to women of superlative quality. It played a key role in the public domain. Returning to Cicero, as a trial attorney, he used the concept of *pudicitia* in a letter to Atticus as the defensive and regulatory force currently holding the republic together, so that it appears to be not just a regulator of sexual behavior, but also a regulator of political and civic behavior. It can be argued that the competition for honor helped Roman men and women flourish, and in returning to Cicero, it is conceivable that his assessment that the moral decay that led to the fall of the Republic was a direct result that the leaders did not act with high moral standards and were not upheld.

If all of the civil strife of these times leading to the end of the Republic wasn't enough, Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus and Pompey, all military heroes during these times, combined their wealth and influence to dominate the political scene in the First Triumvirate from 59-53 BCE. Caesar had returned from a military command in Spain. Pompey had returned from a military campaign in Spain also. Crassus had the reputation of being the richest man in Rome and led the successful campaign against Spartacus. Crassus received a command in Syria and Caesar received a command in Gaul in modern day France. Pompey had received a command in Spain. Crassus died in battle in 53 BCE and left Caesar and Pompey with armies in direct competition. The powerful Senate ruled that Pompey would be endorsed and commanded Caesar to return as a private citizen to Rome. He refused for many reasons considering he would return without any of the protections guaranteed to him without holding office.

He kept his army, crossed the infamous Rubicon into Italy, marched on Rome, and defeated Pompey's forces. He became the dictator in 47 BCE. During his rule, he increased the Senate to include 900 members and gave land to the poor. He extended citizenship to

groups of allies so that they could incorporate into Roman society. Cato had been in formal disagreements with Caesar since before his ascent to power first about the formation of the Triumverate, then about Caesar's opposition to the execution of Catiline conspirators, and finally about Caesar's early proposals to distribute public lands to the people. It had been Cato who had led the Senate in passing a resolution to end Caesar's army command, thereby effectively providing Caesar no immunity from prosecution for his actions in battle. When a group of Senators stabbed Caesar 23 times on the Ides of March, led by Marcus Junius Brutus, it was not overlooked that the leader of the plot was none other than a descendent of Lucius Junius Brutus who had led the expulsion of King Superbus and created the Roman Republic. The Senate by many accounts had killed the champion of the people and grew more hated. They not only killed the champion of the people, but they planned it so that he would die in the curia at the feet of Pompey's statue, his rival.

What can we find about the changing nature of the Roman identity through these civil wars and the crumbling of the Republic that culminated in the beginning of their empire? During the defeat at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE, Crassus, a member of the First Triumvirate, invaded Parthia. Crassus' death and the defeat humiliated Rome. It reconfigured power distributions and on the heels of Sulla's dictatorship and concerns about the republican form of government, it led to the Great Roman Civil War (49-45 BCE) between Caesar and Pompey when the Senate asked that Caesar at the end of his provincial governorship return as a private citizen. This would have made Pompey the sole consul and the Senate knew Caesar had hoped to become Consul when his governorship expired. Back in Rome, from 57-52 BCE, rampant factional violence was led by Caesar's bitter rival pro-Optimates Titus Annius Milo against the partisans of Publius Clodius Pulcher who had allied himself with Caesar.

While accounts of the political and moral decay of statesmen include bribery and much violence from this time, Clodius and other consular candidates for the praetorship had armed gangs in their

employ. The conflict between rival gangs of Clodius and Milo, the murder of Clodius on Appian Way in January 52 BCE and riots had delayed the consular elections in 52. Consuls for 53 didn't enter office until mid-year. The elections for 52 were also stalled. Talk of turning Pompey into a dictator permeated the times. The Senate house had been burned down during riots. Pompey became sole consul in 52 BCE and added Scipio during the last five months. He introduced strict anti-bribery laws and anti-violence laws. At the time, hard-liners, like Cato the Younger, wanted to replace Caesar in Gaul and opposed Caesar's increasing power. When Caesar asked that the Senate ask Pompey to lay down his command simultaneously and the response was negative, *and* included the possibility of making him an enemy of the people, civil war was inevitable.

Caesar beat Pompey after crossing the Rubicon. Rome gave the Republic its death blow, given that the traditions of the Republic were now shot given that supremacy of one individual had been at the very core of what gave the Republic its validity and strength. Yet, with Cato's insistence of prosecuting Caesar for actions he took during his Consulship in 59 BCE and Pompey's gaining favor, Caesar proceeded to prove his honor and dedication to Rome and became a dictator for eleven days to preside over the consular elections. Then, having secured the election for 48 BCE, he followed Pompey and gained victory over Pompey's forces at Pharsalus. Advisors to the Egyptian king killed Pompey.

At the time of Clodius' murder, when we think about Caesar and his triumphs in the Gallic wars (58-50 BCE), we see that Rome had invaded Britain after two invasions, marking the beginning of client kingdoms, and gained territory in Gaul (modern-day Belgium and France). What we should consider is how he united people through the use of propaganda afterwards in June of 46 BCE. Recalling the earlier mention of the use of spectacle in Roman culture, Caesar maximized its use. He threw massive triumphal processions. In historical accounts, he threw four triumphs to reward his victory and to acknowledge each of the victories in the civil war and to

differentiate between them.

He arranged for the festivities to last a month. The first was held at the end of June 46 BCE, honoring the conquest of Gaul including a long array of Gallic chiefs, prisoners and at the head the captive Vercingetorix, the king and chieftain of the Arverni tribe who had united the Gauls in a revolt against Roman troops under Caesar's command. However, not all reactions to the processions were positive. In the second procession, when he paraded Arsinoe in honoring his victory in the Alexandrian War, the Roman crowd did not react as might have been expected by the usual Roman appreciation of their *virtus* and strength in foreign expansions. When the crowd saw the young woman in chains, an Egyptian princess and younger sister of Cleopatra, they took pity on her and loudly voiced their disapproval. He spared her life. The third parade celebrated his triumph over Pharnaces during the Mithridatic War. According to spectacle traditions, triumphant moments were depicted in the parade to show the final battle blows that won the Romans victory. In this case, Pharnaces' flight due to cowardice evoked laughter from the Romans.

His final portrayal of the Battle of Thapsus was complicated by the fact that he did not want to negatively portray fellow Romans who had chosen to fight against Caesar. Instead, he made it appear like the king of Mauretania was the actual enemy and the depictions of the conservative republican army leaders Scipio and Cato, who had challenged Caesar, were shown in ridicule of their suicides. Overall, Caesar enhanced his reputation and since Rome did not rule subject populations by garrisons filled with Roman legions, his use of symbols and promoting the inclusion of subject populations in the daily life of Rome sometimes with all the advantages of citizenship, set him apart from all the faults that were being observed in republicanism.

Although Marc Antony had been at Caesar's side as an ally and a rival to Octavian, who would eventually become the first emperor of the Roman Empire, in Gaul and second in command during Caesar's dictatorship, his role in the transition was historical. Octavian, a part

of the Second Triumvirate that Marc Antony led and also included Marcus Lepidus, had managed, when the alliance among them started to fall apart, to make Marc Antony appear to be under the spell of Cleopatra. Octavian, who like many knew of her relations with Caesar and her relationship with Marc Antony, considered that her vision of Rome was to subjugate it. He marred Marc Antony's reputation. Yet, on their way to the battle that would ensure Octavian as the first emperor, Marc Antony played a pivotal role during this transition. The Second Triumvirate in 42 BCE defeated Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius in the Battle of Philippi. As prescribed by law, the Triumvirate ended in 33 BCE. In Actium, Greece, Antony was defeated by Octavian's forces and Antony fled to Egypt. There, after Octavian continued his pursuit into Alexandria, Marc Antony died by his own sword. However, the enactment of the Second Triumvirate placing the three powerful men to dominate over Roman affairs officially ended the Roman Republic and started the transformation into the Empire.

His assistance during a time of grief at the assassination of Caesar was notable in and of itself. The Roman people had reacted by threatening to burn down the houses of the liberators. He however remained calm and saved Caesar's acts from being annulled by the Senators who may have thought that the Roman people were eager to be free of the "tyrant" Caesar. In reaction, the mob of people searched for the denouncers of Caesar and killed a man they had suspected and stuck his head on a pole. They also erected a column inscribed to Caesar with *Pater Patriae* (Father of his Country). Riots broke out. The desire to bestow a divinity on Caesar consumed them. Antony abolished the dictatorship and secured all the provincial governorships. Although he attempted to establish a peace, Octavian vowed to revenge Caesar's death. He threw splendid games to honor the memory of Caesar and the people knew that Octavian was of Caesar's descent. He began to call himself the son of god (*divi filius*). Antony could not compete with the psychological effect that Octavian's attempts at connecting himself to Caesar had on the people. Marc Antony proved he embodied the Roman identity of loyalty and the political advancement of Rome, and having been the second most

powerful figure in Roman politics, he knew that Caesar's death could have destroyed the sense of the Roman identity that united so many people. Although history would not be kind to him as Rome entered its imperial age, since he was seen occasionally, as by Virgil in the *Aeneid*, not celebrated as much as portrayed as having succumbed to the very forces he was meant to conquer because of his seduction by Cleopatra.

Pax Romana settled over the land with the end of the final war of the Roman Republic and before the Crisis of the Third Century (CE), when Augustus (Octavius) defeated Mark Antony in the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. While some historians note that Pax Romana (Latin Peace) was establishing itself far sooner in the conquered Roman provinces that may be the case. Yet, given the conflicts that erupted so close to the death of Caesar and the crumbling of the republican form of government, the effect of the changes that Augustus implemented had the effect of peace. For one thing, he eliminated the prospect of civil war and reined in the military leaders who might have fomented dissent. Historians portray him as winning over soldiers with gifts and that he instituted a number of reforms, including increasing military benefits while continuing territorial expansion. He reduced the number of legions in foreign provinces and made taxes more equitable. He reorganized the government's administrative relations with the provinces and established a more unified imperial policy. Local traditions did not need to be abandoned. He created special cohorts to keep an internal order.

Pax Romana at this time was greatly appreciated by the Romans who had endured an unending series of civil wars and internal political corruption, bribery and disorder. His purposeful rule of law and internal peace was built on a foundation of appealing to traditional Roman values. He refrained from taking absolute authority considering how valued the traditions of Roman identity were in fighting tyranny from the very beginning days of the Roman Republic. The search to root out abuses of power that became central to the Roman way of life during that period still remained important despite

the formation of the Empire. He believed that people obeyed him because they respected his moral authority or *auctoritas* and he acted and dressed modestly. His political changes were acceptable because he cared for the daily lives of the Romans. Since he had witnessed the moral decay of the Republic, he made adultery a crime even if the effect of his legislation has been questioned. He also gave citizenship to freed slaves.

By the time Emperor August emerged as the ruler in 31 BCE, *pax Romana* led to homage from Easterners in Asia Minor without imposing any sort of Emperor worship on them. Although they had practiced lavishing native kings with divine honors, expressing their loyalty to the emperor became extremely important. They were eager to see the whole of the Mediterranean peacefully united through a system of political and economic strength. His subjects were eager to help trade flourish and temples were built in the emperors' honor within decades of the start of the Roman Empire. Rome's own Senate requested the building of the Ara Pacis (Temple of Peace) in his honor at the end of his life. Although among the Romans, *pax*, the absence of civil war in the domestic sense, has been distinguished from imperialist *pax* in foreign conquests, the Ara Pacis Augustae was more of a monument to military pacification through capitulation to the Roman Empire. At home, *pax* required fidelity to the Roman traditions, institutionalization of internal order, and security and harmony with the gods.

As mentioned, externally from Rome itself, it was more imperialistic and claimed that they were tasked to establish peace and *humanitas* in conquered lands. It was a hegemony based on a noble right to build an empire and to be seen as the lords of the world and did not necessarily mean the absence of military conflict. It did insulate those within the Empire from incessant conflict and during its 200 years; there were more peaceful conditions with a more stable governing body. It encouraged those who had battled Rome to align with it and to recommit to the values of Rome and preserve its consolidated rule.

Chapter 2 The Empire

Although peace may not have been long lasting, the emerging consensus in the beginning years of the empire was a fear of disloyalty. It wasn't acceptable. Watching gladiators and shows featuring the killing of fierce beasts was a favorite past time where, at the venues, protestors might stage protests to express any wishes to the attending emperors. Although under the Republic, oratory was in favor, in the empire it fell out of favor given the emphasis on loyalty. It was considered to be the Golden Age of Latin literature with the likes of Virgil, Ovid, Livy and Horace. Under the rule of Tiberius, the conflict between the elite and the emperor led to a compromise of power that was essential to the stability of Rome. Emperor Caligula's lack of leadership qualities and his lack of virtues soon became a bitter pill for Rome to swallow as they watched his cruelty and violence take center stage. He made a mockery of many of the traditions and felt above it all. He was murdered by the praetorian commanders in 41 CE. After the rule of Claudius and Nero, another civil war in 69 CE brought Vespasian to power. Before the Golden Age, the next two emperors, like Vespasian part of the Flavian Dynasty, were notable for Titus' suppression of the Jewish revolt and capture of Jerusalem in 70 CE and Domitian's execution of elites as conspirators.

Rivalry among the elites was still alive and well and although Nerva, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius experienced peaceful successions, they also led many expansion efforts. This includes Trajan's crossing of the Danube River into modern-day Romania, the greatest military expansion into its maximum territorial extent including eastern Mesopotamia, and much of Europe. It also includes Hadrian's execution of conspirators. Hadrian attempted to increase the reforms set out for provincial governments and himself visited all of the provinces in order to foster a single Roman identity. Hadrian's Wall was built to ensure stability to keep Pict invaders out of Roman territory in the northern border region of Britain and to

prevent allies from maintaining the support of insurgents after a British expedition. He participated in attacks against Judea and also in campaigns against the Germans, Britons and Parthians. He was known as the peacemaker and helped further Pax Romana.

Following the Antonine Dynasty (138-192 CE), the Year of the Five Emperors (193 CE) and the Severan Dynasty (193-235 CE), the Roman Empire experienced the Crisis of the Third Century. This occurred during the reign of the Barracks/Soldier Emperors (235-284 CE). Here the Roman story once again faces much internal strife, near collapse and unlike the usual patrician or elite styled successions, now they faced coup d'etats that Rome had previously rarely seen. These struggles were between commoners who had military careers. This fifty year period (235-284 CE) demonstrated how rivals managed to claim large sections of the Roman Empire and compromised the security of Rome when legions at frontier garrisons were forced to handle internal civil wars over emperorship. As a result, this exposed Rome to external attempts at overwhelming Rome given their focus on domestic problems. Persia challenged Rome's eastern border, while tribes along the Danube and the Rhine also tested Rome's strength. During this period, Rome was subject to frequent raids by the Carpians, Goths, Sassanids and Alamanni.

Some debates refer to the murder of Commodus in 192 CE as the starting point of patterns that damaged every province in the empire and that Emperor Severus weakened the conventional structures that provided protection to emperors. This in turn resulted in cycles of violence that ultimately revealed weakness in the system of politics of the times. Problems in monetary policies, trade and in adherence to the law crept into the cracks of Rome and the long years of prosperity were subjected to the ambitions of military commanders who wanted the most powerful seat in the land. The number of military rulers that led was fourteen over the period. The Franks hit the Rhine frontier. The Goths devastated the Balkans. Local people were preyed upon by corrupt and renegade soldiers or were dragged into forced labor. Demographic studies show that many rural families

fled and local authorities faced shortages on tax quotas and tried to force weakening local families to pay for the increased costs involved in defending the territory internally and externally.

Victory by civil war rather than succession and inflation caused much hardship. It wasn't until the emperor Diocletian (284-305 CE) restored order that this period saw any beneficial reformations. During the Crisis of the Third Century, the Goths killed the first Roman Emperor in battle (Emperor Decius). Rome also experienced the first capture of an emperor by an enemy when Emperor Valerian was captured by Sassanian Persian King Shapur I during the Battle of Edessa in 260 CE. In 260 CE, the Gallic Empire broke from Rome when Valerian was captured and established itself incorporating Gaul, Briton, Spain and Germania. It wasn't retaken until 274 CE. Emperor Aurelian after he conquered the Palmyrene Empire. Aurelian built a wall around Rome. At the time of Diocletian's rule, the empire was considered too large to be ruled from Rome. According to historical accounts, republicanism vanished completely under Diocletian and Rome became an absolute monarchy, which is credited with saving the empire for the next 200 years.

The content of a character may to us supersede the context of a situation. In many cases we've in our minds fallen for many of the characterizations that exist of Rome as an unstoppable juggernaut in ancient times. While the empire had grown by this time to a proportion that made the Roman identity meaningless since it appeared that it was cracking from all sides, both internal and external, the self-destructive forces it faced may have spurred a big reality check. If powerful people could bring an empire to its knees through a series of civil wars during the Crisis of the Third Century after the death of Marcus Aurelius and the murder of Commodus, it may make you scratch your head as to the foundation Rome was built upon. The nature of power brings with it struggle and to it attracts the commotion of a fight for the ruling seat of an empire. While many generally pictured themselves fit to serve the Romans as their emperor that in and of itself did not break down the legitimacy of the empire

or the fabric of society. People went on with their business, although certainly hurt economically, agriculturally and to a certain extent politically as they would have found less emphasis on peace and prosperity and more on the conflicts of the day. *Romanness* was built on *virtus* and strength, getting through seemingly impossible situations with grace and fierceness. It must have been difficult not to hear in the kitchens and fields of Romans concerned about Rome about how the political infighting for power was just but a scar and a symptom of a wilting foundation.

The root of the problem at this point for Rome started with the Year of the Five of Emperors, under the Severans and under the Antonine Dynasty, was how the empire could go about the business of governing and dealing with policy changes necessary to a very vast territory when the ruling seat was nothing but a revolving door. The Severans had legitimized their reign by tying their descent from the Antonines and traced it back to the Emperor Nerva. Had the Romans in the early empire days constructed a distorted view of what the emperor's task was and had the empire's steady hand become so useless that a revolving door would have been an acceptable handling of the empire that the Romans were asked to depend on? Surely, while the traditional power structures were suited for the economic and political development of the common good, it did not provide a sense of steadiness to the Romans who had been used to a system of checks and balances. Even if the Senate had been overbearing and downright ineffectual at times, its absence of importance during the Soldier Emperor years was a sharp cry from the Rome that everyone had been building. During this time, one of the emperors Carus (282-3) didn't even ask the Senate to acclaim him, but relied exclusively on troop support. Macrinus never showed himself during his reign, which he would soon regret. Emperor Maximinus Thrax (235-238) also avoided Rome.

Commodus' reign was considered ineffective and civil war followed, as the son of Marcus Aurelius. His biggest mistakes revealed his obliviousness to the responsibility he held rather than the monster

status that Hollywood has bestowed upon him. He was more simple-minded and easily misled, rather uninterested in being an emperor. He never hesitated in ordering the death of subjects unlike Marcus Aurelius. Many attribute the choice that the Praetorian Guard made to kill him had more to do with how long members of his government and palace had to deal with his caprice. He purportedly gave his conspirators a draft proscription list that may have instigated them to poison him and strangle him. As history recalls, he was nowhere near as worthy of imitation as Marcus Aurelius to Macrinus, who attempted to establish his own hereditary dynasty. He did not break from the Severan dynasty. By the end of the Severan dynasty, when Alexander Severan ruled, it was not Maximinus Thrax who orchestrated his overthrow, but the soldiers themselves, who then forced Maximinus to sit on the throne.

Apparently, they wanted an emperor with a strong fighting spirit. With Alexander at the helm, the Parthian empire was so weakened that they lost it to the Persians, suddenly making the Persians Rome's most feared enemy to the East which led to wars. Many of the soldier emperors, including the last Severan emperor were forced to deal with rebellions on Roman frontiers leading many to characterize the Roman Empire at this time as unstable until Constantine abandoned Rome and reestablished Constantinople as the seat of governance. However, to gain a better understanding of the times before the rise of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, it is valuable to see what led Diocletian into this second period of imperialism.

Given that no single dynasty dominated Roman politics from 235 onwards, rulers did try to establish them. While continuity in the eyes of the Romans may have been important, their attempts did not amount to great outcomes, given that the chaos of the times did not suggest in the eyes of the beholder a steadiness that might have been welcomed under previous dynasties. However, after 212 and the universalization of Roman citizenship to almost all free inhabitants of the Roman Empire, the thought of uniting the people under the

protection of Rome and Roman gods with *pax deorum* may have become compromised given the chaos seen in Rome. The rise of Christianity might have come up for discussion a time or two among the Romans witnessing these transitions.

Certainly at times of civil war, calls for a restoration of normality and understanding the nature of the wars would make sense. At the center of the internal struggles that Rome experienced before Diocletian, the unrest surfaced with the increasing pressures on the northern and eastern frontiers which led to much distrust and disaffection internally. When the Romans started to fight against each other as soldiers, the army was now in the position of not supporting Rome, but was now willing to take whatever steps it took to more properly secure the empire itself, albeit through a rapid succession of emperors. It suddenly became common, after troops attacked emperors in the Severan Dynasty and during the Year of the Five Emperors, that the army was going to take the power for itself and the empire. This would maximize the opportunity for the army and minimize the importance of an emperor as a presence in Rome, rather of a soldier countering the forces that threatened the empire. As the Gallic empire rose and rebelled against Rome in 260, the authority of the Roman emperors and the empire was seriously undermined and more forces attempted to question the hegemony of Rome and its attempt at unifying the people along and within their frontiers.

The advantages gained at the beginning of the Empire, including the relative accessibility of the emperor to the people in Rome as well as the bureaucratic and administrative nature of the role of the emperor were lost at this time to the pervading military function of the emperor. However, the role of the city of Rome was gradually disappearing, which threw much of the system of governance and the political elite centered in Rome into new territory with more delegation of civil, financial and legal matters to others. When we look to understand the various causes of the several civil wars during the beginning years of the Roman Empire, it can be suggested that the Civil Wars in 68-69, after the cruelty of the

Emperor Nero, were nothing like the civil wars between Marc Antony and Octavian during the transition from a Republic to an Empire based on ideological causes.

Here, we saw a demonstration of the great power of the frontier legions, which would later once again play out during the Crisis of the Third Century. In these wars, it did not matter whether the Roman people deemed any of the candidates worthy of the noble position. In fact, the coins that depict the emperors of the four emperor era (68-79) are historically no longer depicted with the dignity and austerity of the previous age, but with what experts have described as a gritty realism.

The civil wars that began during the year of the five emperors in 193 started with the long-awaited murder of Commodus and a brewing rivalry for the seat of power, including the selling of the throne by the Praetorian Guard to Didius Julianus after the assassination of Pertinax. The Roman crowds did not necessarily find the dishonor that Julianus brought upon Rome forgivable and called for the governor of Syria, Pescennius Niger, to seize the throne. While the claims to the throne continued and the era of the Severan dynasty witnessed, the cause of the civil wars during the Crisis of the Third Century should be made explicitly. The failure of the Severan Dynasty to show the type of power and firm control needed over the whole of the empire in facing the immensity of needs and interests is a starting point. Additionally, the need to truly unite the empire given the changing geopolitics led to interregional jealousies and a more guarded traditional elite and senators that feared for their prestige and privilege, albeit that they did not have the military power that led to the rise of the commoner emperors who did.

The power of the frontier legions was felt by all and their interest in securing greater imperial concern for the region where they were protected Roman fronts was clear. As their treasury and declining supply of precious metals, as well as inflation, seemed to show signs of an empire that could not handle all the affairs that expansion brought with it, the soldier emperors of their time

surprisingly did maintain the empire during the crisis fueled by resisting the breakdown of the imperial defense. The pretenders and usurpers were many who either wanted to claim the throne or threaten it in military attempts as continual invasions threatened the Empire. Bringing the provinces to the top of the imperial hierarchy had firmly made a mark on the history of the Roman Empire at a time of anarchy and civil strife. While history remembers this time as a crisis, it does remain an open debate considering. Despite the fact that Rome itself, the Senate, and the ruling elite that traditionally had established how the emperor was chosen and more closely handled the affairs of the empire were challenged, the empire survived even with the continuous fighting given internal and external pressures. That remained the case even with the rise of provincial power when Emperors ruled away from Rome and the establishment of might as the highest criteria to hold the most powerful office in the land.

The reforms that Diocletian instituted after his lauded military record was in response to a need for strengthening the power and the authority of the central government, while focused on the defense at the frontiers. He needed to do something about the constant coup d'etats and reformulate the concept of the Roman government's emperor to stop the number of claims to the seat and to reestablish a sense of steadiness to it. He appreciated at this point in Roman history that he needed to have another leader focus on the defense of the West while he focused on the threats on the eastern and Danubian frontiers. He chose Maximian to rule jointly with him. Diocletian successfully displayed Roman power and repelled invasions. He decided to create a four-man ruling committee. The Tetrarchy would place him as the Emperor in the East with a junior emperor and Maximian would serve as Emperor of the West with a junior emperor. Republicanism had been transformed and nearly recognizable and the Senate still held its seat in Rome. However, as had occurred during the Crisis of the Third Century, the Senate's cooperation was not necessary when the Tetrarchy was established. It just was. The Senate had since the days of the Years of the Barrack Emperors lost much of its remaining power and authority. He established the basis for its

survival in the fourth century CE during his rule.

However, his perceived more eastern autocratic style of imperial government did not have a good effect on relations with Christians. Christianity within the Empire during the third century was representative of a minority; however during the crisis times, the number grew. The Christian churches grew into an institution within the Roman Empire and tended to the needs of the urban citizens. His edict of 303 aimed at the operation of the Christian church after he had pursued the traditional practice of consulting the oracle of Apollo at Didyma. As he valued the unity of the empire above all, he had also ordered other damaging cults be suppressed. Since the Christians would not worship the state gods, then they were being disrespectful to the foundation of the Roman Empire built on a foundation of respect to the Roman gods.

Diocletian ruled over the separated Western and Eastern Roman Empire from 286-305. After Diocletian asked Maximian to abdicate in May 305, he gave the office to Constantius, although Maximian would try again to return to power. Eventually Constantius resecured his appointment. Diocletian's rule marked the end of the Crisis of the Third Century and he abdicated his position voluntarily, being the first emperor to do so. Christianity would end up becoming the preferred religion under Constantine, with its first Christian emperor and the son of Constantius, who shared the emperorship over a divided Roman Empire. Every emperor accepted the Christian faith excepting Julian (361-363). The Byzantine Empire would continue until 1453, although the Western Roman Empire ended in 476.

Chapter 3 West and East until the Fall of the West

Upon Constantius's death, in order to avoid a possible civil war, the Emperor in the East, Galerius was forced to accept the appointment of Constantine (306-337) by the troops as the new emperor of the West, despite wanting to raise Severus to the throne. He had approached Diocletian criticizing the youth of Constantine and Maxentius making them unfit to be emperors. Maxentius was angered by the circumstances and challenged Constantine. After defeating Maxentius, Constantine and his brother-in-law Licinius split the empire with Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East. After the Battle of Chrysopolis in 324, Constantine became the sole ruler of a united Empire. Constantine favored the Christian religion in the Edict of Milan in 313 that both he and Licinius signed to stop persecution of Christians. In 330 CE, the Byzantine Empire was born after he had laid the foundation. The capital became Constantinople and he called it his new Rome. He joined the Christian religion with political powers. Thus started the Constantine Dynasty that lasted until 364, followed by another split of the empire between Valentinian I (364-375) in the West and his brother Valens (364-378) in the East.

According to historical accounts, the Constantine dynasty was a hard one to follow given the strong attachment to the departed dynasty. They began their rule by publishing a decree that resembled the proclamation of 313. This one proclaimed *libera fucultas* (freedom to profess their own religion). They became known for practicing religious moderation in their policies, despite how Valens' rule was more prone to ecclesiastical disputes. While Constantine had ruled, he called the Council of Nicaea in 325, at which the Nicene Creed was adopted. Valens is depicted as having faced conflicts with some of the Nicene supporters even though he did not take a hard line against Nicene churches. In any case, Valentinian I fought many battles including against the Quadi, Sarmatians, and Alamanni and defeated a revolt in Africa. He is considered the last great western emperor.

As the Huns appeared in Europe and the Goths crossed the Danube, he and Valens faced many new threats to the Roman territories. Valens fought at the Battle of Adrianople during the Gothic War (376-382). Uprisings in the Balkans led to Valens' war with the Goths when he offered them battle in Adrianople in August 378 and was seen as a major turning point in the history of the Roman Empire. His large army was defeated and he himself was killed. This opened the Balkans to the Germanic tribes. Immediately, Theodosius I was appointed and assigned to deal with ending the Goth raids which ended in peace agreements. The Huns were held off by diplomacy, defense and bribery and were defeated by the Romans later in 451 when they invaded western Europe.

As Valens' successor, Theodosius (379-395) was the last to rule over both the western and eastern empire. He extinguished the Vestal Virgins, reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, made Christianity the official religion of the empire in 391, and fought in two civil wars while known for campaigning against the Goths. At the Battle of the Frigidus, the civil war between Eugenius and Theodosius after the death of Valentinian II, his victory ultimately led to the last unification of the Roman Empire.

Ambrose the Bishop deeply rebuked Theodosius for an incident in 390 in Thessalonica. The Emperor had heard that one of his Captains had been killed at a Goth garrison during a bad riot when a charioteer had been arrested for debauchery. The crowd didn't like the Captain's decision and killed him. In retaliation, Theodosius had the Roman army round up the town and 7000 were killed in the stadium. The bishop, when Theodosius regretted his decision, called for his repentance despite the fact that an emperor could act with impunity. The next year, after having done a public penance at the cathedral before Ambrose, Theodosius went to Thessalonica and asked for forgiveness.

Another group that had grown to prominence at the time was the Vandal tribe. Many of these Germanic groups contributed greatly to the decline and eventual collapse of the Roman Empire. During the

first half of the fifth century, having seized Roman territory in northern Africa, the Vandals were weakening it along with the invasions by the Goths. Theodosius had a trusted advisor, Stilicho, who was a German from the Vandal tribe who rose through the ranks to govern the west while Theodosius governed the east. When Theodosius died, although his two sons would rule, his son Honorius was only ten years old. Stilicho was appointed to act as regent for Honorius. Although suspicion lurked about whether he was more loyal to the Germans or to the Romans, Stilicho defeated both the Goths and Vandals in separate campaigns; they had escaped from battles only to return to continue attacking the frontiers. The Roman ministers of Honorius decided to have him arrested, put on trial, and executed. His entire family was killed.

Finally, given the changing nature of the church, Theodosius placed the administration of the church under two heads, one in the east in Constantinople and the other in the west in Rome. At the time, it became clear that the intellectual outlook of the West and of the East were of two minds. The West took an approach that was more speculative, while the East took an approach that was more philosophical. Latin was fast becoming the language of the West, and in the East most chose Greek. The two churches had developed different ways of thinking on issues such as marriage, church government and other controversies like the words about the Holy Spirit in the Nicene Creed. He also issued laws in 391-392 banning forms of pagan worship. He reversed the trend of actively supporting Arianism and enforced orthodoxy through edict.

From 395 until the last of the western Roman emperors, Romulus Augustulus was deposed in 476, the emperors spent less time in Rome. In 402, Emperor Honorius moved the Western empire's capital to Ravenna, a northern Italian city on the Adriatic coast. The German prince Odovacar gained control of the Roman army of Italy and deposed the last Roman Emperor. Many historians have written about the historical events that followed and characterized them as the Dark Ages. In 402, the Germanic Vandals, Alans, and Sciri tribes

crossed the Rhine. Roman power started to collapse. In 412, the foundation of the West Gothic kingdom and Britain separated from the Empire. As will be further explored, the Byzantine Empire continued until 1453 while the Holy Roman Empire, having been established in 800, became known as the political heir of the Romans of the West until it was destroyed by Napoleon in 1806.

The series of events that led to the decline of the West and the Fall of Rome may not have changed the lives of farmers, peasants and the culture at large irreversibly, however the central Roman state collapsed and many local societies in the provinces suffered tremendously. As Rome crumbled, so to did the British and eastern Gaul Roman landowners and those who depended on them. The causes of the collapse include the very Gothic migrants that Valens fought at the battle of Hadrianople. While the debates sometimes aim to blame the migrants themselves for stripping away the tax base, this argument is difficult to sustain since throughout the history of the Roman Empire and the Republic, taxes were considered to be an extreme burden at times of civil wars, frontier defenses and expansion invasions or protections of provinces. Some argue that it began with the murder of Commodus and the next heir to the emperor's throne Pertinax and the following years of civil wars.

If emperors were never sure if the army or guard wouldn't find them expendable, then what securities or guarantees did an emperor have in feeling protected by those who called him their emperor. If emperors feared murder by those with power in their own empire, then there were degrees of fear that seemed like the purpose of the check on their powers was being fulfilled. Yet, past a certain point, it is possible that in the state of mind of those that empowered the guard, no one could stop them from the cycles of power struggles that led to the emperor's revolving door. Was there a check on the check? If Diocletian and Constantine had anything to say about it, then yes. Diocletian reduced their status in 284 and they were no longer part of palace life. He disbanded the Praetorian Guard in 312 at the Battle of Milvian Bridge since they could no longer be trusted. They were sent

to various provinces. Then, it's hard to blame them toward the end of the empire.

Yet, underlying what they stood for and the constant threat to the emperor, the aggressive nature of handling affairs like bar bouncers may hold the key. How did the collapse actually happen under Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire? By the time Romulus Augustus was in power in the West, Emperor Zeno ruled the Byzantine Empire. After Emperor Valentinian III's assassination in 455, the Vandals had sacked Rome. The Roman general Orestes ousted Emperor Nepos in 475 with the help of a German migrant who had come to Italy with the Heruli tribe in 470. His name was Odoacar. Since one of the leading issues of the day was immigration, the Bishop Synesius of Cyrene, Libya wrote to the emperor of the eastern Roman Empire, Arcadius, in the early fifth century about the importance of addressing the xenophobia that was being felt by the indigenous population and suggested that they should be given rank of allies and endowed with land and treated kindly.

It was turned into a Roman honor to maintain control of the immigrant barbarians. Odoacer was the head of the bands of conquered barbarian tribes who was the son of Edeco, a Hun commander who had been in the service of Attila the Hun. Odoacer had been part of an invasion of Rome led by the grandson of the Visigoth (western Goths) king, Ricimer as part of an attempt to rule Italy from Milan to rival the Roman emperor Anthemius. Anthemius was beheaded. He then helped Orestes oust Anthemius's replacement Julius Nepos in the west in 475. This power struggle continued and resulted in the end of the Western Empire. Orestes did not follow through on the Bishop's request to treat the barbarians in service with great respect and give them promised lands. This led Odoacer to lead a rebellion. He declared himself King of Italy on August 23, 476 and captured Orestes and killed him. In September 476 he deposed the Emperor Romulus Augustus, who at this point was a young teenage boy. He did not replace him. The Senate ended up following through

on the land that had been granted to him, but Orestes had refused to fulfill the promise that Rome made to its migrants in exchange for their service to the empire. Odoacer also received from the Byzantine emperor Zeno the rank of patrician. In return, Zeno expected that Odoacer would recognize Julius as the western emperor.

Odoacer refused. He established agreements with the Vandal king of north Africa, made peace with the West Goths and made other efforts to show his growing power. However, when the Byzantine emperor Zeno was approached by the eastern goths to form an alliance with a young boy named Theodoric, Odoacer would ultimately see his powers limited. Odoacer continued to fight the eastern goths while his relationship with Zeno continued to fall apart. By 489, Odoacer was classified as a usurper and Zeno sent Theodoric, now the eastern Gothic king, to dethrone Odoacer. In 491, Odoacer lost the well-defended Ravenna and failed to break Theodoric's siege. Although a bishop in Ravenna had brokered an agreement that Theodoric and Odoacer would rule Italy together, Theodoric's men thrust their sword into the usurper and killed most of his family. Although he had considered his territory over the sixteen years that he ruled a part of the Roman empire and he met with a horrible ending, he had preserved the imperial system despite never being an emperor.

Theodoric continued to rule in Ravenna, but was not allowed to grant Roman citizenship or to extend any appointments to Goths. He has been described as seeing himself as the restorer of the Western Roman Empire. However, history and his judgment would not allow him this achievement when he attempted to ally with the Franks. The Byzantine emperor found this to be suspect and allied with Clovis, the King of the Franks. One of the most interesting aspects of Theodoric was the Roman tradition he used to try to forge a harmony between the Goths and the Romans since it was well known at the time that there was a major trust issue based on religion. The religion of the Goths was Arian Christianity. It wasn't an easy choice for them to simply convert to Roman Catholicism. There was a lot of resentment between the two groups for practicing their own religions.

Theodoric used his chief publicist Cassiodorus, a former Roman senator and a consul, in the process during his rule over the eastern Goths and afterwards. Cassiodorus was known to have built his life around the concept of *civilitas*, which was considered not only a peace slogan that proclaimed the Goths friends of the Roman civilization, but had been a tradition of the Roman civic culture. They never referred to the Goths as barbarians. His effort to maintain the tradition was used in various conflicts. The eastern Goths were viewed by western Christians and Italians as heretics. Theodoric worked toward this policy of *civilitas* while in office as a solution since he, as well as other eastern Goths, were considered heretics by orthodox Christians. By relying on religious toleration, he could protect various people of faith, like those who practiced a Jewish faith and the eastern Goths. He worked with the saintly bishops on various matters and recognized the pope as the leader of the Roman church and first patriarch in Rome.

Yet, as the papacy distanced itself from the Byzantine Empire and kept good relations with the religiously tolerant Theodoric, the Byzantine Emperor Justin I (518-527) began to consider the eastern Gothic influence on the papacy too great and also had an ambition to reconquer the West. Justin I pushed for the elimination of heresy in the East, which included Arianism. Theodoric began to round up suspected conspirators and punished them to death. *Civilitas* stalled and in 526, he urged Pope John I to restrain Emperor Justin in his attempts to oppress the Arians. The pope's success in tempering Justin's zeal was noted, however it did not quell his anger directed at the pope. He had the pope arrested and imprisoned. Before Theodoric died, he proposed Felix for election as the next pope and the clergy of Rome elected him and consecrated him on May 12, 526. Theodoric's daughter became ruler of Rome since Theodoric's grandson was too young. She was friends with Pope Felix and protected the bishops and clergy. Theodoric's actions that stirred the Byzantine Empire against him when he married a sister of Clovis, king of the Salian Franks in Gaul, hurt the eastern Goths, at a time when he had promoted religious tolerance.

Chapter 4 Byzantine Empire Until the Split with the Papacy

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the last to rule both East and West was Theodosius. We've learned a little about Honorius in the West, but not as much about Arcadius in the East besides the appeal from the bishop in the early fifth century to address the xenophobia that was growing and felt by indigenous populations. As the first emperor to reside in Constantinople, he appointed John, surnamed Chrysostom the "golden-mouthed" to the see of Constantinople. Years later, he would banish Chrysostom from the city after he refused to appear before the synod to speak to a number of charges made after what has been described as an unscrupulous alliance between Arcadius' wife Eudoxia and the archbishop of the rival see of Alexandria, Theophilus. The synod had been convened by Theophilus. Chrysostom had a reputation of violent sermons against women and had targeted Eudoxia with much of his venom, leading her to her actions. The rivalries between the sees at this time in history are well-recorded. Christian unity suffered from the dominant bitter dispute about Christ's exact nature.

History has noted that split between the brothers interfered with a united action against Alaric, the first king of the western Goths, when he sacked Rome in 410. When Alaric had initially entered Roman service in 394 under the Roman General Stilicho, he was not properly rewarded. This led him to conduct raids against Stilicho. In 397, Arcadius appointed him *magister militum* of Illyricum and granted to his men subsidies. Since Emperor Honorius hadn't paid him, Alaric started his three sieges on Rome in 408 and he supported the new emperor of Rome Priscus Attalus in 409, who also appointed him *magister militum*. After he deposed Attalus, he captured Rome on August 24, 410. Although he died later that year, he had grown to be a real power in Rome.

By the time of the Leonid dynasty, the Byzantine Empire was

building its own identity, especially after the Council at Chalcedon in 451. It was ecumenical in nature and followed in the footsteps of Marcia, Pulcheria, Theodosius as the emperors that had grappled with the requests for a single faith to strengthen the empire. This council was the fourth council to the highly disputed nature of Christ. It also decreed that the see of Constantinople was now at a rank as high as Rome. By around 450, Constantinople was on its way to acquiring that supra-metropolitan status alongside Alexandria, Rome and Antioch. A schism, known as the Acacian schism, about the christological definition of Chalcedon formed from 484 to 519 between Rome and Constantinople.

In building its own Byzantine Roman identity, gaining power at the top was no longer exclusively at the hands of a Roman people that only came from Rome. Many leaders had risen through the ranks that originated from the provinces or from conquered warring tribes. Leo I (457-74), was known as a Bessian from Thrace. The Bessians came from the territory ranging from modern day Bulgaria and the Balkans. They have been described as the fiercest of the independent Thracian tribes. Emperor Zeno (474-91) was from the wild Isaurian people. They came from the Konya Province of Turkey in the core of the Taurus Mountains. As in earlier Roman times, Rome had extended all the privileges of citizenship to the people of the lands they conquered and migrants and allowed for social mobility.

By the time of Justin (518-527), who was born near Nis, a city in southeastern Serbia which was taken in the Roman conquest in 75 BCE, followed by his nephew Justinian, hindsight is all that was left of the Western empire's effect on the eastern identity. Nis was also the birthplace of Constantine the Great. Western elites were by this time starting to look disparagingly on the eastern 'Greeks.' Since the Vandals were consistently attacking the coasts of Italy, Greece and Spain, and Emperor Severus (461-465) was made the western emperor by Ricimer, and not recognized by the east, there was continual tension between West and East.

Leo I, the Eastern Emperor, was solicited by Ricimer to discuss

the appointment of a Western sovereign that the east would appoint. He designated Anthemius (467-472) to go to Ravenna. This combined effort gave them the power to attack the problem of the Vandals together in 468 financed by Emperor Leo I. After their failure, aid from Constantinople ceased since their forces had sustained the heaviest losses. He defeated the Huns and eastern Goths in 459-467. In 471, Anthemius intervened against Euric, the western Gothic king, and Euric crushed the campaign. Anthemius held Ricimer, western *magister militum* accountable for the defeat. In 472, Ricimer rebelled after the animosity degenerated into civil war and he besieged Rome and entrenched the emperor. Ricimer then persuaded the emperor Leo and the Roman Senate to appoint Olybrius in Anthemius's place. Olybrius was proclaimed that April, although his title was short-lived as he died two months later, and was replaced by Glycerius at which point the eastern king Leo interfered again. He appointed Julius Nepo as emperor of the West, who was accepted by the Romans and the Gauls. Glycerian was reappointed as Bishop of Salona. Nepo didn't last long after Orestes led a revolt and placed his son Romulus Augustulus on the throne. The rest is history as mentioned up until 476.

At this time, Emperor Zeno ruled in the east. The Monophysite (Latin version of Greek miaphysites) controversy consumed emperors over the next two centuries. The papacy was Chalcedonian in its theology. Despite the significant theological schisms that arose, the papacy still at this time looked to the Byzantine emperor as an ally and for protection against the threat of the Lombards. Emperors Zeno and Justinian (527-565) attempted to affect some form of reconciliation, however both monophysites and orthodox saw no way out. As Zeno ruled over Constantinople, the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria were embedded in a deep schism with Rome and Constantinople. He feared that the Eastern Church would disintegrate. In 482, he suggested as a solution the Henoticon "Instrument of Union" and it became a source of conflict. As the situation unfolded, a synod was convened by Pope Felix II at Rome to denounce the supporters of the Henoticon and the document itself. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Acacius was

excommunicated by Pope Felix for his support of the Henoticon. This led to a schism that lasted 35 years between the Eastern Church and the western church. The following emperor also supported the Henoticon. By the time of Justinian, no less animosity was felt as before. His expansions during the Middle Ages attempted to restore the west. He is best known for his code of laws in order to help people understand them and make them easier to apply, while removing laws that were outdated. The trade network at the time expanded into the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor and Palestine, Spain and Italy, Egypt and other parts of North Africa.

Justinian wanted to unite the whole empire under one faith. He attempted a solution called the Three Chapters. By the time May 5, 553 rolled around, after installing Pope Vigilius, who was not supportive of the solution and knew that many western bishops were not supportive of it, Justinian tried to make it impossible for Vigilius to disobey. Although Vigilius still boycotted the meeting, the Patriarch of Constantinople presided and a council meeting approved the Three Chapters. Vigilius did eventually sign. The Second Council of Constantinople of 553 gained the recognition it needed from the council of the Christian Church. His attempt to bridge the gap between the Monophysites and the Chalcedonites was partially successful and his conquests based on opposing heresy were a good start. Within a decade, these reconquests of areas that had justified their own kingdoms through a common opposition to Arian occupations, as well as Vandal North Africa, eastern gothic Italy and west gothic Iberia, rested on how Justinian saw the rough treatment of Nicene Christians in Arian hands. He used moderation in helping conquered Arian clergy transfer into the Nicene ecclesiastic hierarchy without being demoted.

Despite how Arianism was considered crippled in the West, this brings us to the Lombards and the blowback. While Justinian's reconquests exhausted the Byzantine Empire financially and in human resources, it also left Italy open to invasion after his death by the Lombards. Without having unified or restored the entire empire or

secured one faith in his lifetime, Justinian did plant the seeds though for the battles that would continue after his death. Five years after Justinian died, Muhammad would be born near the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula in Mecca. Justinian may have wanted to secure the empire under one faith for different reasons, but instead he managed to enter into the historic record a need to preserve all of Europe and the Christian faith. His effort was potentially misguided since those who would find his attempts at solving the long-standing reasons behind the schisms between the churches in the east and west have interpreted his solution as forcing religious uniformity to gain unity.

Justinian took what Constantine created for the Byzantine empire and molded his authority and the use of the church for political ambitions down the path that all the emperors since Constantine had prepared the power of Constantinople for. Ultimately, while the east and west were embracing their separation, the church and the state in the east were adhering to a power structure that gave the powerful church the emperor's ear, but it certainly wasn't one-sided. The East had interfered with the West's influence over the papacy several times, yet Justinian's influence over the church in the East was spectacularly wielded. As mentioned, he summoned councils to interfere with the religious conflicts and didn't shy away from taking control of the process and the substantive dealings when he thought it called for it. He ruled with an authoritative grip. Guided by his own imposition of unity over the west and east, his approach often led to increased antagonism as he mistook his place in history and misunderstood the underlying differences between the various Christian groups that he aimed to conform for the sake of his vision. He strained relations in the west despite wanting to impose the unity that was once part of the empire that the Romans knew as he recovered regions lost to invaders.

As Christians shaped the new Roman identity, the hostilities between the factions of Greens and Blues threatened to tear the emperor off the throne in January 532. Before Justinian would let the

yearly tribute payments to the Persian empire required by the Eternal Peace signed in 532 fall into arrears in 540, leading to further attacks, he had to tackle the civil strife that in part he had created. The riots were the culmination of grievances and factors. One was that prior to Justinian's reign, he had been a notable supporter of the Blues aggressive exertions of power through activities that intimidated others that considered claiming the imperial throne. During these times, the faction colors were a critical aspect of social identity, but had also grown into gang warfare. The young men were referred to as *demes*. Reportedly, street violence was high and these gang members propagated a look that reminded people of the Huns in direct contrast to Roman norms as a sort of counterculture. The color factions grew in power at a time when the circus and chariot races were extremely popular. The colors themselves while limited in number not only channeled fan enthusiasm, but grew into group identities that were expressed by many who habitually wore their faction colors on game days.

Showing loyalty to the color faction became a core identity in late antiquity and these factions had high visibility. It did end up violent in nature like it did during the Nika Riots. Despite not necessarily being politically partisan in nature to begin with, the Blues had been enlisted by Justinian for his own interests and in return he procured posts for them among other favors including protection. Once he was emperor, he cracked down more on the factions which they resented. However, he belonged to the Blue faction from among the four colors (Reds, Whites, Greens, Blues) that entered the chariot races. The specific incident that roused the anger of the partisans arose from a determination that gave the prefect of Eudaemon authority to punish members of the Blues and Greens for murder. When two had escaped execution, the Blues and Greens united in an effort to have them pardoned. This happened during the races held at the hippodrome. Justinian did not respond to their solicitations. They rioted and made further demands. The rioters attempted to install a new emperor. In response, the effort to restore order included efforts to bribe members of the crowd to break the crowd mentality before

the eventual massacre of thousands.

The Lombards in 567 had emerged from the former Roman province of Pannonia (modern day Hungary) on a path of destruction that included a victory over the Gepids, their former allies. The Lombards were by some considered heretics since they were possibly Arian, although the open debate about conclusive evidence makes it somewhat elusive. Some have suggested that it was Pope Gregory I (590-604) that misread the situation and took the prohibition of Catholic baptism of children among the Lombards as sanctioning Arian baptism. They were also represented as pagan with idol worship. Although Audoin, the Lombard ruler in 548 represented himself as Catholic to the Emperor Justinian, his son and successor, Alboin did not convert to Christianity, married a Frankish Catholic princess, and was considered nominally Christian. At the time, records reveal that bishops were anxious about the influence of Arian Christians who preached at Alboin's court and wanted Alboin to convert to Nicene Christianity.

Justinian's officer corps may have read like a multicultural catalog including Mundo who was a Gepid, Sittas who was an Armenian and others. Justinian had given them Pannonia after he took it from the Goths. He bought peace from the Lombards and gave gifts of gold to the Gepids. When war broke out between the Lombards and the Gepids it was in part due to Justinian, because it was in his interest to destroy the alliance to avoid allowing them to become dangerous to the empire. As the Lombards grew eager to expand and take possession of Sirmium in lower Pannonia occupied by the Gepids, Justinian cultivated the relationship and turned them into a firm ally by 552 when they won against the Gepids with Justinian's assistance despite calls for neutrality by the Gepids. Justinian sent roughly ten thousand horsemen along with fifteen hundred warriors. After another war between the Lombards and the Gepids, Justinian granted peace to the Gepids.

When Justinian's successor, Justin II ruled, he stopped payments to the Avars, a tribe that the Byzantines had paid to keep

the peace in the Balkans where they occupied. They in turn stopped peacekeeping and allied with the Lombards in 567. They helped the Lombards crush the Gepids and helped the Lombards decide to take over Byzantine centers in Italy. This is considered to be the starting point when the papacy separated from the Byzantine Empire. Byzantines offered little support to the papal lands when the Lombards attacked. They attacked under Pope John III in 568. All of his records were destroyed during the invasion. The next pope's reign was delayed for eleven months as a result of the invasion and because it was in the times of the Byzantine Papacy (537-752), when popes required the approval of the Byzantine emperor for consecration.

The Lombards continued their policy of expansion until they were defeated under Charlemagne in 775 when their kingdom wholly dominated the northern Italian peninsula and played a crucial role in Italy's history. They made Pavia their capital. They ruled harshly and abolished many institutions and reduced inhabitants to slavery. Pope Benedict who replaced Pope John III experienced the plunder of the continual attacks by Lombards. His successor Pelagius II, who was ordained in 579, attempted to get the Franks to intervene in Italy to save the church as a result of getting limited assistance from Constantinople. Since the Franks had three subkingdoms: Austrasia, Neustria and Burgundy, the pope asked that the Burgundy Franks help, although they were allied with the Lombards. Both Justin II and Tiberius II had suggested the use of gold to both bribe the Lombards and attain Frank support. However, Tiberius would not send military forces given that they needed military strength in their war with the Persians. He provided gold to bribe the Lombards to ally themselves with the Byzantines and consider the possibility of fighting the Persians. The bribes and inducements did not work. On the second approach of Tiberius, he sent a small force. Two territorial churches, one in Aquileia and the other in Milan, emerged in the northern regions occupied by the Lombards that allowed the pope to intervene in the occupied territory. In 585, Pelagius secured an armistice with the Lombards.

The next pope, Pope Gregory I built the foundation for the future alliance with the Franks and bribed the Lombards to end the incursion. He fought tirelessly through diplomatic means to achieve peace with the Lombard forces. The exarch that had been installed by Tiberius II to help Rome accused Gregory of treason consequently. Gregory persisted. His peace lasted for two years. A new treaty followed in 603 and was in force until Gregory's death in 605. He also secured that the heir to the Lombard throne was baptized into the Catholic faith instead of in the Three Chapters faction or the Arian faith.

During the seventh century, the Muslim conquest began. While Constantinople became the largest and wealthiest city in the world, many have characterized the middle ages as the Dark Ages as a result of the domination of Germanic tribes like the Franks in Europe and the invasion of Rome. The transition from antiquity to a Dark Age could be felt by the Byzantine guardians and the papacy who were now realizing the might of some of the Germanic tribes like the Lombards and the Franks and their territorial ambitions. In characterizing it, if one considers it within the larger historical context, as violent with civil unrest and civil wars along with pressures to defend the fronts, yes.

Yet, was it truly a Dark Age? Life without the constructs and institutions created by the Romans and so central to many of the provinces in terms of their political order and identity became a struggle that the Franks and the evolving powers of the Church would have to confront, but waiting for the former Roman empire to rise again like it was to bring back the classic antiquity it represented wasn't a real option. Surely, the legacy of the Roman Empire was shifting into a post-Rome world where the center of power was being destroyed and new empires were emerging as they confronted the realities of their world. Certainly, the world continued to spin despite the changing alliances, borders, and invasions by Germanic tribes. With the leadership and successes of Pope Gregory I came a chance to envision what the origin story of Rome foretold. It was a change for

the better out of the chaos of abandonment and Romans could appeal to their higher nature and rely on spiritually authoritative drivers of change that refused to cower before the flourishing Byzantine authorities or the empowered expanding Germanic tribes.

It's conceivable certainly, as we will discuss momentarily, that the efforts of Emperors Theodoric and Justinian in their time to restore the Western Roman Empire for the former and the unity of the entire empire for the latter were just as futile and inevitably flawed and unrealistic as the Crusades' attempts became in liberating the Holy Land in the 11th and 12th centuries.

One can thumb through the biographies of all the emperors until Byzantine Emperor Leo III declared that all the emperors were iconoclasts and heretics in the eyes of Byzantium in 726 to notice forming cracks. As the Frankish Empire would prove when their kings became the first rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, their early leaders, notably King Clovis didn't climb under a rock when the Roman Empire crumbled in 476. As the only empire or state that formed within the limits of the Western Roman Empire, they were unlike any of the other Germanic tribes in that one sense. In another sense, soon after they overran northern Gaul in 486 — despite the eastern Goths entering Italy in 489 when Zeno sent Theodoric to dethrone Odoacer — they were allied with the Byzantines. In a twist of fate, it would be the Franks not the Byzantines that would protect the western territories so associated with the Empire's republican and monarchic past. They helped destroy the last vestiges of Roman power in the West at the Battle of Soissons.

When the Huns during the third and fourth century split the Goths into two main groups, the Ostrogoths (eastern) and the Visigoths (western), they ran into conflicts with the Germans, Franks, Lombards, Vandals and Alani. The fight for cultural and ethnic boundaries and identities in Eastern and Southern Europe caused the Byzantium wars for the next two centuries. The Germanic Wars with the Romans that led to the earlier emperor Honorius moving the capital to Ravenna during the Sack of Rome were among many that

devastated Rome and left it fighting for its life. The Battle of Soissons between the Frankish forces led by King Clovis I and the Gallo-Roman Soissons helped secure the Franks as a real major regional power in 486. It became a key battle for Clovis I, King of the Salian Franks who was the founder of the Merovingian dynasty that ruled the Franks for two centuries. This dynasty ended in 752 when the pope deposed the last Merovingian king and anointed the first Carolingian monarch, Pepin the Short before the most famous Frank ruled the Holy Roman Empire, also part of the Carolingian dynasty, Charlemagne.

Since Clovis I started the rise of the Franks as a successor state of the Western Roman Empire, it's helpful to get a sense of who he was and possibly consider what they hoped would emerge in the place of the Western Roman Empire. While the Church became the standard-bearer of the Roman imperial tradition as the notion of the empire and state dissolved, the kingdom of the Franks and the growing Byzantine Empire began their ascent, but compared to the Roman Rex and dominus, it was not absolute. The power that the Church exercised on the emperors of the fourth century would need to continue with the new monarchs. Clovis converted to Catholicism in 496 since ecclesiastical power was favored especially if the kings had not yet converted or endorsed or defended the religious organization. They assimilated some of the features of the Roman state, like the legislative and jurisdictional traditions. However, they did not remain independent of the king's influence. Still, the link to the Roman past through the adoption of many aspects of Roman law provided a unifying cultural strength that conveyed that the new rulers would rule based on the rule of law.

Clovis expanded the Frankish power over Gaul and divided it into four parts. His conversion to Catholicism gained him much support in Gaul and throughout the West. It made possible the alliances with the papacy in years to come. By the time of his death in 511, the Frankish territory included both banks of the Rhine and most of Gaul. His four sons received each of the parts and together they formed the greater monarchy, with no single ruler. In 508, at a

ceremony in the church of Saint Martin in Tours, the Eastern Emperor Anastasius I gave him a purple tunic, a cloak, and diadem to complete an alliance in faith and granted him an honorary consulship. This set his ruling into an imperial context. The relationship however with the papacy would weave an alliance that brought protection to the papacy and destruction to Arianism and rival forms of Christianity.

Although the Roman Empire was an entirely new identity now with the spiritual center of the papacy in Rome and the growth of the Frank Empire as well as the Byzantine Empire, Rome didn't ever really die given that much of its strengths were retained by those who conquered it and adopted by the new leadership to conform to the times. With the Franks achieving such an important alliance with the papacy, both the Merovingian dynasty and Carolingian dynasty proved strong allies by pledging to help conquer the Lombard kingdom under Pepin's rule in 754. The Frankish kingdom in 755 and 756 marched into Italy and defeated the Lombards. They donated the vast tracts of conquered lands to the Roman Church that formed the basis of the Papal States.

Byzantine Emperor Leo III's iconoclasm movement that led him to order the removal and destruction of sacred pictures in churches in Constantinople and Byzantine-controlled areas of Italy was not well received either by the Patriarch of Constantinople or the papacy. Leo III strained relations with the papacy when he refused to continue financial contributions to the papacy when they refused to implement his policy of Iconoclasm. This further reinforced the need for the papacy to depend more fully on the Frankish kings for support and protection.

The formal split would take place under the Frankish King Charlemagne when Pope Leo III, protected by Charlemagne and the Franks from the papacy's enemies, crowned Charlemagne the Holy Roman Emperor in 800 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Despite the fact that the Roman Empire from its origin to its Republic and then to the collapsed Western Empire once unified with the East had built and then abandoned territories as far as Britain, these areas were left

unprotected and had to adapt to the circumstances post-Rome. While they adopted some of the ways of the Romans and built on them, the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms like the Frankish kingdoms proved that decentralization was more inherent and defining of the identity and spirit of the times and stronger than the primacy of the Roman state over the individual. The individual would become a more important factor in the establishment of the British Empire years later and despite how the Frank Empire would also be torn apart — since it did not have the economic base of the earlier Romans — European territories would not try to build as vastly and with the use of force as did the mighty Roman state.

Whether the soldier arrived from Rome no longer meant instability to the various tribes, kingdoms and provinces that were absorbed into Rome's political machinery for the purposes of the state. They implemented their rejection of the pre-"Dark Ages" where much of the Roman purpose was to collect for the purposes of an economic base that the Franks could never achieve and to benefit the collective Roman identity and *pax Romana*. Decentralization took on its own pathways throughout Europe during the times of the Franks, Anglo-Saxons, and Germanic migrations that didn't align with the Roman model — falling in some ways under its own sheer size. The spirit of the times may be considered antithetical to the building of the vast empire that Rome had envisioned and required resistance. As Constantinople continued as the center of power for the Byzantine Empire and soon the Holy Roman Empire became more than a concept from Pope Leo III, it begs the question whether the *Romanness* that the previous Empire cultivated may have indeed relied too heavily on top-down models. Hadn't *Romanness* for a long time developed in the streets and become absorbed by the state for the purposes of extending these rights, citizenship, and protections to the conquered?

Had the fabric that united the Romans been able to transform or had it just left the impression that Rome was simply put only protection by this all-consuming empire after the West fell to the

ground? It appears that the Franks' protection over the papacy may lead us to a conclusion that at the very core of the Byzantine Empire lay the very same flaws that tore the West down. This can be seen in their embodiment of conquering distant lands and willingness to refrain from preserving protections surmounted their responsibility to those who entrusted their lives to the empire as an unreliable neighbor destined more toward growth. Had the Romans forgotten their origin and instead of being the abandoned grown to abandon?

The Byzantine emperors that preceded the split with the papacy and the development of the Holy Roman Emperor during the seventh and eighth century grappled with military defeats at the hands of Muslim forces at a time when successors of the Prophet Muhammad conquered the Holy Land, along with Syria and Egypt that fought off Eastern imperial rule with Miaphysitism. They also saw a decline in influence over the papacy when Pope Zachary (741-752) became the last Greek pope of the Byzantine papacy. Afterwards, the popes no longer asked for imperial confirmation from the Byzantine Empire. The Lombards had continued to extend their power and captured imperial Ravenna in 751, which led to the Pope turning to the Franks for help. This alliance paved the way to the Holy Roman Empire. The Byzantine Empire grew weak against the Turks by 1071 when they were defeated at the Battle of Mantzikert. This is more a subject for a future chapter, but it is worth noting here as the Byzantine Empire would find itself in a position at the time of Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komenos to need to appeal to Pope Urban II for aid.

As the pendulum swung in these times, the Byzantines of the seventh and eighth century were devastated by a series of epidemics. It's worth stopping here for a moment to consider the use of the term Byzantine as a descriptor of the identity shift and whether from the East it became clear that the Roman way of thinking was unrecognizable. Many historians consider that the 6th century was still properly named the Eastern Roman Empire, but by the time of the seventh century, it was certainly markedly Byzantine. To put it in the

larger context, within the Empire and Republic itself there had been a series of identity shifts some of which was driven by military necessity and some by imperial ambitions. Others, as we have read so far, had more to do with the changing population that absorbed the conquered people and led to a less Roman purist identity. Rather it faced a variety of cultures and religions over top which lay a certain identity based on the unity the empire itself brought through protections and citizenship and its imperial status and conquering nature. While efforts to impose a Roman culture on those who were absorbed did not involve cultures having to disengage from their own cultural practices in the West, although that empire declined, it's reasonable to see that with the formation of the Eastern empire at least from the perspective of religion, the culture was being more thoroughly imposed on neighboring territories and within.

Also, the demographic of Constantinople, although also described in historical accounts as cosmopolitan like Rome had become more of a mixed Hellenic population. Hellenic Byzantines had a different sense of *Romanness* than their contemporaries in the West. They wanted to distinguish themselves from the Latin West and show their legitimacy in claiming Greek-speaking lands. Along with the linguistic divide that formed with the Latin West and the Greek East, Latin did still play a major role in the Byzantine empire with Greek as the dominant language at the societal level. The Byzantines did not abandon their Hellenism in favor of orthodox Christianity, although over time, the West abandoned the early Roman gods when faced with a similar choice. The Byzantine culture asked that they embrace both the classical antiquity and their new Christian faith as they reconciled inner religious culture and external secular Hellenic thought.

It is important also to bring up the role of the *padeia* in the Byzantine culture. This was an education steeped in the initiation into traditional Greek cultural factors. The shared cultural foundation of Greek philosophy, rhetoric and including Homer was more important to the identity than say blood since it brought unity through its cultural *padeia*. As a cultural inheritance, they reinforced the stories

passed down through the ages to continue to build on a heritage that was separate from the Latin West and included the classical mythology.

The last few Byzantine emperors before the turn of the century made huge contributions worth mentioning at this point as we start to shift our focus to the introduction of the Holy Roman Empire. Byzantine Emperor Leo III (717-761), already mentioned for having starting an iconoclasm policy that did not receive either popular support, patriarchal support or papal support, was known as the Isaurian. Still, he was able to thwart the Muslims and defended Constantinople from a Muslim siege. Byzantine Emperor Leo IV continued his fight against the Muslims and softened the iconoclastic unpopular policies that led to the subsequent East-West schism of the Christian church. Before his wife Irene rose to the throne in 797, Leo's son Constantine VI was elevated to co-emperor.

During this time the Moechian Adultery Controversy began. Basically, the church wanted to dictate to the emperors what to do, because of the adulterous marriage of Constantine VI (780-797) to his mother's lady-in-waiting Theodote after he placed his wife into a convent and divorced her in 795. The Patriarch of Constantinople refused to perform the marriage, although he did not bar the emperor from the sacraments. He did allow a priest to conduct the ceremony. A monk from the famous monastery of Stoudios on the outskirts of Constantinople, Theodore of Stoudios, objected to the remarriage and his opposition led to his being exiled by the emperor. Given the heightened concerns about Iconoclasm and the morality of the emperors, this controversy erupted as a way to question who properly represented the will of God in Byzantine society. Was it the church or was it the emperor? If it was the emperor, then his actions were inappropriate. The population did not approve of the divorce and remarriage either and criticized the emperor's forced exile of Theodore of Stoudios.

His mother Irene assumed power amid the controversy in 797 and planned to have her son arrested. His wife escaped. Although

Constantine tried to escape, the army found him and Irene had him blinded. This too did not go over well with the population. In 802, she was deposed. Byzantine culture came to increasingly be influenced if not shaped and defined by the church. In an effort to reverse rulings of the Iconoclastic Council of 754, she appointed the Patriarch Tarasios. In 787 at Nicaea, the Seventh Ecumenical Council convened and set decrees proclaiming the restoration of image veneration as the new official policy. When the Muslims raided, she was forced into costly peace treaties that reinstated previously agreed tributes.

Iconoclasm was not just an internal struggle that sharpened the Byzantine thinking about the role of art and its function in adhering a religious life. It drove a sharp wedge between the Eastern and Western Christians leading the popes to categorically reject it as heretical.

When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day in 800, the Pope argued that the imperial throne was legally vacant since they had deposed Constantine VI and Irene as a woman could not be an emperor. Some then saw this as a fight to claim a universal and indivisible Roman Empire not the way the pope intended it. As history recollects, Irene ignored Charlemagne and Charlemagne ignored Irene. Yet, within a year, when Charlemagne was making military plans in a naval expedition against Sicily, she attempted to negotiate with Charlemagne. This negotiation worked and he took no further military action. In an effort to instill peace between East and West, Charlemagne offered marriage to Irene since neither were married. Her advisors and courtiers, who were already planning on taking power after her, did not like the Frankish proposal, even if Irene did consider it. Although she took for granted that she had time to consider the proposal, she did not. On October 31, 802, Nicephorus, a patrician and the general logothete, arrived with a group of high officials at the Great Palace and deposed her. Charlemagne offered an alliance on equal terms to the new Byzantine Emperor to which Nicephorus did not reply purposefully.

Chapter 5 Beginning the Holy Roman Empire until East-West Schism

As Charlemagne accepted the divine kingship reviving a Constantinian constitution without the Byzantine, he was now universal and in the likeness of god, he claimed the same authority that Constantine had. A settlement in 812 with the new Byzantine emperor Michael I after an armed conflict over control of Venetia and Dalmatia was reached. Charlemagne built Aachen as the Second Rome, sometimes called the new Jerusalem. He spent lavishly in forming the new city and history recounts that between 791 and 796, the treasures he seized from the enemies in the Danube River valley, Avars, would finance the construction efforts easily. Even as he groomed his sons, who ended up tearing the empire apart, to the throne, he laid the foundations for the Holy Roman Empire, formally founded by the German King Otto I in 962 when the Carolingian Franks' territory broke apart.

In understanding whether the pope acted as if under divine providence or had the authority to construct a holy empire, many people have questioned whether the Pope had the legal or religious authority to place Charlemagne at the head of the empire. There was no precedent within Roman law. The pope did not want to send Christendom into a civil war by notably declaring a new holy empire, choosing to bide the papacy's time. Pope Leo III needed Charlemagne's protection himself since he had been elected as a pope after the previous much-beloved Pope Adrian I had groomed his nephew for the ascension.

After many factions made it clear that they did not agree with the election of Leo III, it appears he started on the wrong foot. He was viciously assaulted during a procession and was imprisoned by his enemies in a monastery. He escaped confinement with the help of the Duke of Spoleto. Charlemagne, before his coronation, had summoned Leo III to his court in Westphalia. He secured the Pope's return to

Rome with a Frankish military escort. Since the Pope had been accused of many crimes and felonies that had no basis in reality but had been trumped up to mar his standing in the eyes of all whose respect he needed to succeed, prior to being named emperor, Charlemagne in November 800 brokered a deal. He gathered an assembly of Romans and Franks. The Pontiff provided a solemn oath denying any wrongdoings and the accusers officially dropped all indictments. Soon he would coronate Charlemagne, loosely following the rituals used by the Byzantium. The Patriarch of Jerusalem sent emissaries to present the king with the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and the standard of the holy city.

As justification for coronating Charlemagne, the papacy relied on what would later appear to be a forgery. The "Donation of Constantine" appeared to give the popes great political clout, including the claim that the fourth-century Constantine had given the papacy supreme control over clergy along with imperial power over the Western portions of the empire. The forged document was reportedly used to protect the papacy when the Byzantines failed to protect the papacy from the Lombards and numerous other occasions. There is general consensus that it was written by a Lateran cleric. By the authority of the Donation, the pope gave the crown to Charlemagne translating the imperium from the east. Charlemagne was going to revive a Latin empire. Although he independently interpreted his responsibilities, his rule was a papal invention.

During the Carolingian dynasty, Germany had its remote beginnings. The migrations of the Goths, Vandals, Lombards and Franks and other "barbarians" are considered ancestors of modern Germans, although the term Germanic has been misused and overused since they did not live in a territory called Germany and had many different places of origin, including Eastern European territories and Scandinavia. Charlemagne was as mentioned the King of the Franks and as the most prominent figurehead of the Carolingian dynasty, during this time, the kings of the Franks became the first emperor of a forming Holy Roman Empire. Their history of invading the Romans in

the fifth century preceded them. They inhabited the land between the lower and middle Rhine and were the people of Gaul before they became the political heirs of the Romans in the Latin West. The Salian Franks settled near the lower Rhine River close to the North Sea and the Ripuarian Franks settled along the middle Rhine River.

Under King Clovis (466-511), the Franks soon controlled many of the groups and territories of Europe, including the Mediterranean to the English Channel and also from the Pyrenees Mountains to the Rhine River. Charlemagne continued to build their vast Frank empire until it broke up into Germany, Italy and France. The Carolingian dynasty had been fierce and although Charlemagne's father Pepin was the first Carolingian king, the family tree shook off powerful historical figures before they became kings. Charlemagne's grandfather, Charles the Hammer (Charles Martel) who had governed the Franks from 718-741 as Duke and Prince of the Franks and Mayor of the Palace had stopped the Mohammedan army Saracens that invaded France in 732 at the seven-day Battle of Poitiers. By then Mohammedan emirs had extended their dominion in Spain and Gaul and their progress in Western Europe was cut short during this battle, giving the King of the Franks the nickname 'the Hammer.'

During his rule, Charlemagne promoted liturgies and church music that was Roman just as his father, the previous Emperor Pippin did. He continued diplomatic relations with the Abbasid cause in Spain, led an ill-fated expedition in an attempt to oust the Umayyads in Spain, and contacted the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad as early as 797. He fought more than fifty military campaigns. The Abbasid Empire's caliph, Harun al-Rashid reportedly congratulated Charlemagne with the gift of an elephant. They negotiated Christian access to the Holy Land since the loss of Jerusalem in 638 was a deep regret to the Latin West. As we will discuss later, the Crusades in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries would still attempt to reclaim Jerusalem.

Charlemagne maintained diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Emperor and did not rule in isolation as has been depicted after the fall of the Western Roman Empire referred to as the Dark

Ages. His tolerance of the Jewish community allowed him to welcome them to his kingdom and they often acted as middlemen with the Near East. The Carolingian dynasty and the Ottonian dynasty are considered prime movers in the process of state formation in the territories of the West Slavs as well. As a means to keep the peace, Charlemagne, after the conquest of the Saxons and Bavaria, organized 'marks' along the eastern frontier of the Frankish territory. This buffer would be the launching point of invasions and retained Frankish officials stationed at these border marks with standing armies. History tells of how Charlemagne received embassies and presents from all the eastern border Slavs and that he actively participated in mediating and concluding dynastic fights among the Wilzi. The Carolingian Marks were useful to future emperors. While he had the esteem of European inhabitants on both sides of the Rhine for the unity he brought to the Frankish Empire and in the relationships with the papacy, the empire would see decline after his heirs carved up the empire into separate kingdoms in the ninth century. The empire remained divided in the tenth century and left the vision of the papacy temporarily with Charlemagne's last breath. The unity of the Carolingian period was not only challenged by the internal strife that led it to more feudal kingdoms, but also external attacks from Vikings, Saracens and other tribes during this time. The Treaty of Verdun in 843 signed by Charlemagne's grandsons brought the division of the Carolingian territories and is seen as the first steps toward building France and Germany.

While Emperor Lothair I challenged Pope Paschal I for sole authority over Rome, the papacy under Pope Paschal I had emphasized that the Emperor had been given the right to rule for the protection of the Church. However, with the following papal leader Pope Eugenius II, Emperor Lothair I imposed a constitution that established imperial supervision of all the administration of Rome, a citizen's oath to the emperor, and created a requirement on the Pope to swear fealty before consecration. More restrictive policies were introduced under Pope Sergius II as the popes became required to acquire an imperial mandate before being consecrated, a reminder of

the Byzantine control over the papacy that had been removed before Charlemagne ruled.

Did the Frankish protection of the papacy continue with the new threats on the papacy that emerged in the time of Charlemagne remain relevant to the identity bestowed on the emerging Holy Roman Empire? Muslims were a great threat in the mid-ninth century as Sicily was overrun in the 820s, Mohammedan forces established themselves in 838 in Italy, and in 846 a Saracen fleet attacked Rome. Pope Leo IV (847-55) was consecrated without imperial permission and received financial help from Emperor Lothair to build a forty-foot high wall that was twelve feet thick. It contained 44 defensive towers around the Vatican. As the empire turned into kingdoms and duchies as the Franks often resorted to warfare against each other's realms, the papacy however had more difficulty seeking the protections of a less powerful empire it had tried to build.

The Mohammedan forces were not the only threat, because internal struggles involving Christian nobility lusting for power demonstrated through factional violence continued to undermine Rome's power and ability to follow through on protecting the papacy. Emperor Louis II as King of Italy and western emperor attempted to follow through on their responsibility to protect and defend the south. He campaigned against the Saracens and expelled them from the duchy of Beneventum. Victory led to campaigns in Apulia and Bari. He was unsuccessful in his siege of Bari in 852, but in 858 his army defeated the Saracens. He captured Bari from the Mohammedan forces and also assisted the Byzantine territories in campaigns where the Mohammedan forces had taken cities from the Byzantines. When he returned to Beneventum, the local Lombardi nobility construed the Frankish emperor as lording over their population and captured and held him prisoner. The Mohammedan forces exploited this situation and laid siege to Salerno. The emperor was released. During his fourth attempt on Bari, Emperor Louis II did receive some Byzantine support. After he died in 875, the Byzantines began to play a major role in southern Italy. The Byzantine governor of Otranto Gregory occupied

Bari at the invitation of its Lombard citizens, who feared the Mohammedan forces. By 877, they approached all the southern Italian states to build alliances against the invaders. That same year Pope John VIII asked the Byzantine emperor for naval protection for Rome. The Byzantine Empire was increasing its power in the west once again and was dealing with a more compliant papacy.

The West Frankish King Charles the Bald (875-877) attempted to reunite the Franks and was crowned emperor like Charlemagne in 875. He was defeated and with him reunification efforts would have to wait for Otto I. Charles the Bald too was unable to follow through on the responsibility to protect the papacy. Charles the Fat, king of several kingdoms, in 881 was coronated the Emperor by Pope John VIII. He was the last of the Carolingian rulers. He conducted failed attempts at fighting the Vikings and instead resorted to paying them in silver and offered Burgundy as a retreat, which infuriated the people since he failed to do that at the beginning of the siege to spare them any of the ensuing misery. The Burgundians revolted. He gave up his title when King Arnulf of the eastern Franks raised an army in 887 to remove him by force. The empire disintegrated even more into smaller areas.

In 889, Pope Stephen V, consecrated without imperial approval, turned to King Arnulf of the eastern Franks for protection. Arnulf eventually replaced Emperor Bernard. At the time, the legitimacy of Bernard was being questioned and two regional magnates with Carolingian blood were ready to make claims. Berengar, the Margrave of Friuli, claimed the kingdom of Italy in 888 and Guido, the Margrave of Spoleto, claimed a realm north of the Alps. Since Guido's claim failed, he made a counterclaim for the Italian kingdom and went to war against Berengar. When the pope figured that one of them might dominate Rome, he attempted to persuade Arnulf to take the imperial title. He did not. To protect his interests, the Pope was forced to recognize Guido of Spoleto and crowned him emperor. The next pope Formosus also crowned him along with his son Lambert later that year. Formosus had encouraged

Arnulf to seize the crown, since there was a deficit in trust in Lambert. In 894, he drove Lambert out of Rome and was coronated in 896. The rivalry between Lambert and Arnulf and popes would not end there. Since Arnulf had worked diligently to remove his competitors in turning the Magyar alliance against Berengar in 899, Berengar lost the support of the Italian noblemen during the battle, since he couldn't get rid of the Magyars. Berengar (915-924) would eventually serve as an emperor in 915 after he fought Louis III the Blind (901-905) after he was the King of Italy.

Muslim threats to the papacy continued. Pope John X (914-928) was elected and immediately created an alliance between Berengar, Theophylact I (the medieval Count of Tusculum), and Alberic of Spoleto, and Lombard princes of the south to eliminate the Muslim fortress on the Garigliano with naval support from the Byzantine Empire. The Arab base was destroyed in August 915. A widespread revolt against Berengar in 922 led by Rudolph II, King of Upper Burgundy, led to his execution in Verona and an invitation to Rudolf II as a replacement. The emperor's throne would remain vacant until Otto I claimed the throne in 962. The daughter of Rudolph the II Adelaide married the son of Hugh of Arles, Lothair II. She became the second wife of Otto the Great. The nobles of Rome had gradually risen in power, including Theophylact, who called himself consul and senator of Rome. While the consul Alberic II ruled over Rome, the son of Berengar, Hugh of Arles, and Otto were rivals for preeminence over the empire. Alberic ruled with absolute power for a brief time during a period of anarchy that saw several popes after Pope John X was imprisoned and put to death.

Otto I had asked in 951 for the imperial diadem, but it was rejected. After he married Adelaide, the widow of Lothair, he convened a synod in 952 for the purpose of debating the state of the Christian empire in Augsburg. He also proceeded to act as if the imperial duties were already his own. He sent an envoy to the Cordoba Caliph carrying a letter that he hoped would persuade the Arab ruler to change his negative attitude to Christ. His interest in

representing *christianitas* with other rulers of other religions is well documented. He gained victory in the Battle of Lechfeld in 955. He quickly asserted his strength at being the true defender of Christianity. In terms of evangelizing, he supported the mission in Denmark by founding three bishoprics and he also created a network of dioceses in the lands of the Polabian Slavs for missionary purposes. He prepared bishoprics in Bohemia and attempted to bring the Christian faith to Hungary. Since Otto I had been taking active steps toward evangelization before he became emperor, in 948 at a synod convened in Ingelheim, he had the decisive say about who would hold the see at the Archbishopric of Rheims which was located in the Kingdom of the West. Despite Otto at the time being the King of the East Franks, he was securing a hegemonic position in Western Europe. His efforts did not go unnoticed. His efforts continued to enhance his prestige.

Given the internal confusion in Rome and the external threats to their territories, it's not surprising that the relationship between Rome and the Byzantine grew more dependent. Alberic appointed five popes starting with Leo VII, Stephen IX, Marinus II, Agapetus II and Octavian as John XII. The dominance of Roman ruling families influenced the ability of the papacy to affect any change or take any initiative. Pope John XII called on Otto in 960 to protect them from Berengar II when he invaded the Papal State. Still, Berengar II (Berengar of Ivrea) would not surrender to Otto's forces until the end of 963 in Pavia. When Otto began his initial campaign in Pavia in the autumn of 961, Otto hired loyalists throughout Lombardy and sent his trusted advisor, Abbot Hatto of Fulda, to make arrangements to secure his crowning as emperor with Pope John XII. In the meantime, he assumed the crown as King of Italy.

In 962, when Otto I of Germany chose to revive the empire, the papacy considered this a hopeful sign of change. When John XII appointed Otto I as the first official Holy Roman Emperor, Otto pledged to be guarantor of the independence of the Papal State through the Diploma Ottonianum. The pope was deposed a year later at a synod that Otto convened when the pope attempted to persuade

the Magyars and the Byzantine Empire to join in a league against the emperor, because he was suspicious of Otto's increasing power. A series of power struggles continued over the next few years. Although the Emperor of Constantinople was offended, by 972 Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimiskes recognized the title of Otto I. Otto had won over Tzimiskes by explaining how since 966 he had been supplying allies to attack Byzantine possessions that had fallen into Muslim Arab hands in southeast Italy in Langobardia Minor (modern day Calabria and Puglia).

Otto I in 962 became the official Holy Roman Emperor and the protector of the papacy. What was the reaction from the Byzantine Emperor at the time? The news of the time certainly made the serious competition between Byzantium and Otto I for southern Italian Lombard prince loyalties known. They may have paled in comparison to the disruptive raids by the Magyars that reached Salerno and the Balkans, and by 934 Constantinople, at which point, at the Battle of Lech, the then German King Otto I defeated their common enemy. Nikephoros II (963-969) pursued an aggressive expansion policy for Byzantia in the Balkans and in Italy during an invasion of Sicily in 964. His forces reestablished Greek power in Italy and reduced Benevento and Salerno to states.

In 967, during a rare occurrence of perceived mutual interest, a Byzantine truce with the Fatimids (the Caliphate of Ismaili Shia from North Africa that had built a stronghold in Sicily since its first settlement in 827) occurred. It served as a response to the presence of the German Ottonian army in southern Italy. Given the ancient claims to rule in the area, the Byzantines began to pay annual tributes and both sides were ready for peace. The pact didn't matter too much to the autonomous areas of southern Italy. Otto I resumed his campaign. In the winter of 968-69, he succeeded and by spring he besieged Bovino, a former Byzantine castrum. When Otto had to return north, he left Pandolf I Ironhead, Prince of Benevento and Capua, to continue the siege. He was captured and sent to prison in Constantinople, which led to a Byzantine assault on the area. While Otto wasn't ready

to surrender or be defeated, he led a new army and retook several towns.

The Byzantine emperor wanted to regain a foothold on the island leading to armed conflicts with the Ottonians, while the next Byzantine emperor John I Tzimiskes (969-976) kept a less hostile policy toward the Ottonians. Instead, he expanded toward Syria and the east. His own niece, Theophano, married Otto II in 972. In 982, Otto II invaded the south to defeat the Sicilian amir Abu'l-Kasim, who had invaded Calabria during a Holy War. Otto II was defeated. Attacks had gone on by the Mohammedan forces since the 820s. The raids continued as southern Italian cities fell and Italian subjects of the Byzantine empire likely felt little loyalty towards their distant lords. Byzantine Emperor Basil II (976–1025) also planned an invasion of Sicily in 1024-5, but there was more of an emphasis at the time of defending the Balkans against Bulgarian attacks. The first half of Basil's reign was filled with regular raids on Byzantine southern Italy by Mohammedan forces. Under Basil II, the empire reached the peak of its medieval power.

The Saxon Ottonian dynasty lasted until 1024, thirty years before the Great Schism (1054), and the crown was passed to the Salian Frankish dynasty with Conrad II (1027-1039) just as the Byzantine Emperor Basil II stepped down and Constantine VIII (1025-1028) emerged. Although Conrad II led an unsuccessful raid into Poland after Poland had invaded Saxony, he also led an army into Hungary against King Stephen I who had raided Bavaria. The Hungarian crisis subsequently got resolved by all the involved parties. He incorporated the Burgundian realm into the Holy Roman Empire in 1032-34. He conquered Slavic territories. His son Henry III (1046-1056) as emperor took military actions against Bohemia and eventually succeeded in 1041.

Before he moved to Italy and solidified power in 1046, he had organized an expedition against a revolt of Godfrey the Bearded, Duke of Upper Lotharingia, and conquered the rebelling duke. He had led a first expedition to Hungary, and although he failed to regain the

throne for the king who had turned to him for his assistance, he brought the region under German supremacy in the early 1040s. Hungary continued to be in a state of conflict. Henry III led an unsuccessful campaign and the Hungarians continued to invade Carinthia for years despite a peace negotiation with Pope Leo IX. The Slavic territories he had conquered rose up again.

Pope Leo IX (1049-1054), who had been nominated by Emperor Henry III, led an army to attack the Normans south of Italy where he was captured. He died shortly after his release. Who are the Normans? They appeared in the first half of the eleventh century and grew in power incrementally not in any massive military raid by gaining their own lands and expanding their power in southern Italy at Aversa (near Naples) and at Melfi (in Apulia). Two leaders, Richard Dregnot at Aversa and Robert Guiscard at Apulia would lead them in their conquests. They eventually subdued the Byzantines and Muslims, and drove out the Byzantine Empire from lands in Italy and expelled the Muslims from Sicily over two centuries. Since Pope Leo IX had added to his spiritual duty becoming the lord and protector of Benevento, which was mostly in a state of conflict with the Normans, he was forced into action. After a series of unexpected internal Norman fights that led to the assassination of a Norman leader and an ally, the Byzantine emperor offered to send an army to help crush their common enemy occupying Italy.

Their effort failed, leading to the abovementioned army that the Pope himself led and his captivity in 1053 near the medieval town of Civitate. The Holy Roman Emperor Henry III sent the Bishop Otto of Novara to Constantinople to set up an alliance that led to a pact against the Normans, despite no negotiations with the Patriarch Kerularios. Diplomatic efforts between 1055-1056 led to the pact. In 1053, despite theological differences, Pope Leo IX had wanted to build an alliance with the Byzantine Empire against the Normans. Archbishop John of Trani, Argyros and Patriarch Dominikus Marango of Grado went to Constantinople at the time to convince Kerularios of the need for an alliance against the Normans. However, Kerularios

would not set aside his position on the azyme controversy. The reform papacy had claimed the right to determine what constituted proper behavior and belief in Christendom. Kerularios would not relinquish his position on the controversy harming any chance of an alliance. Orthodox churches, including the Patriarch Kerularios reproached the Latin Churches for using azyme (unleavened bread) during the Eucharist, while Latin or western churches have maintained that leavened bread or unleavened bread are both acceptable.

With no alliance, Pope Leo, in 1054 again sent a diplomatic party including his chancellor, Frederick of Lotharingia, Humbert of Silva Candida and Archbishop Peter of Amalfi. They brought a letter to Constantine IX (1042-1055) and discussed other religious contentious issues. This included the filioque matter and clerical marriage. The filioque matter concerns the Procession of the Holy Spirit during liturgy in the Nicene Creed, as the Latin doctrine holds that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, not just the Father alone. Kerularios rejected all of the demands and refused to meet the delegation and on July 16, 1054, they complained about his obstinacy. Cardinal Humbert deposited a Bull of Pope Leo IX excommunicating Patriarch Kerularios on the high altar at Hagia Sophia.

Underlying the two disagreements already mentioned was a persistent disagreement about papal supremacy and the other had to do with the nature of how they saw things and their intellectual outlook. They were not of like minds and it was clearly becoming difficult to work this out. Historians suggest that the West seemed more speculative while the East more philosophical in its approach. The Latin Church was influenced by Roman law and Greeks saw theology and life as the context of worship. Some historians have considered the eastern Church as more based on Pelagianism, meaning that the original sin did not actually pollute human nature and that human mortal will is still accessible in decisions we make about good or evil without divine intervention. This allowed for more compromise between the ideal and the possible. The Latin Church developed its

stricter doctrine of original sin and grace. Many of the controversies arose in Southern Italy when the Norman warriors conquered in the 1040s since the Normans began to forbid Greek customs in Southern Italy.

Two attempts to reunite in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries will be discussed further in the final chapter about the Holy Roman Empire before the Holy Roman Empire was destroyed by Napoleon in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars following the Treaty at Pressburg, signed in December of 1805. Although many discussions among historians suggest that it was never meant to be permanent, enough events, ecumenical interpretations and religious convictions stood in the way. Politically, Napoleon's organization of the Confederation of the Rhine in July 1805 led to sixteen German states ceding from the Holy Roman Empire and joining and came under the protection of France as a vassal state. The Holy Roman Emperor of the time, Francis II, after a defeat during the Battle of Austerlitz to Napoleon dissolved the empire.

Yet, he had installed himself as the Emperor of Vienna two years earlier, during the same year that Napoleon declared himself emperor of the French. The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) also seemed to firm up the foundation for a permanent partition. Despite Pope Innocent III's vision for the Fourth Crusade as an attack on Saracen Egypt to reclaim the Holy Land, some of the Crusader leaders defied the pope's ban on attacking any Christian states. The ban had been concealed from many who fought in the Crusade army purposefully. They ended up making Constantinople a target of their attacks, despite there being no plan to do so, and upon making their final assault on April 13, 1204, they founded the Latin Empire of Constantinople from 1204-1261.

As the eleventh century played a pivotal role in defining the distinct identities of Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, the tenth century had cultivated a distinct eastern Roman identity promoted by the Byzantine aristocracy. There was a preoccupation with the establishment of the Byzantine cultural heritage, specifically

Greek contributions with a blend of Hellenistic, orthodox Christian, and ancient Roman ingredients. Their counterparts in the west may have excommunicated Patriarch Kerularios, but he didn't mince words while delivering his parting shot in his anathematization of the legate of the Pope when he excommunicated him referring to the legation as men coming out of the darkness.

The western counterparts were religiously nothing like the eastern Romans. Socially, some have noted that the creation of a Europe consciously sought to be Franco-Latin instead of Roman. Yet, this could probably mean Roman in the traditional sense based on historical unifying principles and common traditions and fears. *Romanitas* was developed during the Carolingian Renaissance, even if they were all Romans of an ideological kind, held together more closely now with a Roman-inspired Christian creed with Latin the dominant language. The Franks in the West were a mixture of Gallic, Frankish, and Roman cultures and in the east Frank lands, they were German. Eventually, the west Frank land language would become French, since east Frank lands and west Frank lands gradually became France and Germany, respectively.

A dynamism surfaced in the Holy Roman Empire with revitalized urban life, new agricultural technologies, the growth of maritime commerce in the Mediterranean and North Seas, and an increased pace of life and transactions. While the Holy Roman Empire presided, the nobility and princes were at times free from imperial interference except for when there were conflicting interests with the empire, although their activities did increasingly entangle with the framework of the empire. Since a large number of principalities of various sizes were united under the emperor, it's useful to consider that they were not all equals, but that an aristocratic status ranked them. They had different relations with the emperor as a result. The aristocracy's social rules and values dominated the culture and in many ways later facilitated the growth of nation-states as a way to overturn the aristocracy's grip on power during the Holy Roman Empire. The overriding patriarchal values and those who attempted to

prevail against them were criticized or worse.

To answer the question posed early on in the Introduction, was the Holy Roman Empire solely reliant on and defined by the will of one man, Charlemagne and lacked a solid foundation, it's possible to turn this around in our hands like a beautiful prism. Was it simply reclamation of glory, or more of an effort to overcome a betrayal that the papacy felt when the Byzantine Empire could not as readily protect them from the constant assaults? If the need of the papacy was so great to build a new empire that would secure its interests and be a more reliable partner, why hadn't it simply built up its own army and avoided building a Holy Roman Empire? In comparing the early *Rommaness* that had developed in the empire that crumbled in 476 and watched as a Byzantine Empire grew and a Holy Roman Empire became a reality, one can imagine a more external effort to project power in the former and a more inward shift in the latter. Building on this possibility, the earlier Romans had based their empire on power determined by authority and protection. In the Holy Roman Empire, it's possible that the shift inward was at the core of the building of the empire. If the spread of Christianity was so well embraced by not only the powers that be, but also those who were enveloped into the Holy Roman Empire, then it can be said that the needs of focusing on the power of faith united those who found solace and strength from its formation and existence. They seemed to have felt it as if by divine providence.

However, what then can one say about the Lombards whose attacks on the papacy initiated the calls by the papacy for protection? To the Lombards, who had overrun the former imperial territories of Pentapolis and Ravenna, the claim to Ravenna and former territories was a main cause of friction between Rome and the Lombard kingdom. Even though Pope Hadrian I had expected to resolve the issues in the papacy's favor after King Charles of the Franks (Charlemagne) secured Pavia. The papal state was secure. This would destroy the aims of the Lombard King Desiderius, who had tried to persuade Pope Hadrian to anoint Charlemagne's brother Carloman's

two sons that had fled to the Lombards for protection in 771 when Carloman died. The unction, anointment by the Pope, was traditionally reserved to be administered to a king. Desiderius had tried to have the Pope anoint the two boys as protection against Charlemagne. That issue of the unction of the sons was now resolved since Charlemagne was also motivated to fight for custody of the sons and made the princes no longer a factor to be used for political advantage by the Lombards in the eyes of the Pope.

Yet, let's investigate what motivated the Pope to choose the Frank king eventually in a line of emperors of a Holy Roman Empire. We must consider that since Desiderius as king of the Lombards was unfriendly to the Pope and acting against the interests of the Pope, that in the eyes of the Lombards, Charlemagne would for intents and purposes appear a better solution to avoid the constant antagonism and political quarreling the Lombards represented to the Papacy. Charles wanted to protect the papacy and their spiritual duties and needed to force the Lombards into compliance. He had done so by discussing the matters with the papacy before independently securing his victory that led to his accession as Lombard king in early April 774. Although Hadrian's main interest was divine support, it was also to maintain papal independence and territorial growth for the papal republic. Charlemagne did accommodate Hadrian when he granted an enormous amount of papal lands and increased the papal territory. He awarded the pope nearly two-thirds of Italy. In essence, they had secured harmony, historical cooperation and the prospect of absence of war in Italy.

However, papal encroachment and the political realities were not subordinated and the Lombard kings did not for long assume a spirit of cooperation and permanent peace, as they demanded protection of royal interests not to merely become carriers of the papal vision for Italy, or for that matter Charlemagne's. He did not have any reason to rebuild the Lombard monarchy, while other Lombards did. The desire for political stability to unify the people was so great that Charlemagne pursued it as an interest for Italy, the papacy, and by his

own will and attempted to achieve unity where Romans were only finding reason to tear themselves apart. Essentially, the papal vision for Italy and the Lombard vision for Italy clashed and Charlemagne had tried to stop the political tension.

Yet, did this make itself so important that it could be the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire? As the Frank-papal relationship immensely developed and the papacy wished to secure old Roman territories, the Lombards were most concerned about the anti-royal protectorship that was emerging and apparently its long-term possibility. They had earlier in the seventh century barely tampered with the papal state because as they saw it, the Byzantine territories were more strategically critical. Increasingly, as we have seen, although there were land claims made by the Byzantine Empire and the papacy, compromised by interests of ruling kingdoms like the Lombards, the fight wasn't only over land, but who held the supreme authority in issues involving the Christian religion.

Even though Charlemagne's father the King of Franks Pepin the Short had secured the relationship with the Pope and promised to bring back to the papal territories (those territories that belonged to St. Peter that were robbed by the Lombards), history's claim on the situation helps us get a broader perspective of what was at play here. If you remember the "Donation of Constantine," it was used to extend many powers to papal rule. One of the things that the emperor granted to the papacy at that time was not only dominion over the city of Rome, but also over the entire territory of the old Western Empire, as inheritors of St. Peter. Charlemagne had reaffirmed this, despite all of the attempts by Arian chieftains to have destroyed the Roman empire and he was determined to restore past glory.

Glory of the past in and of itself would not create the identity at the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne hired scribes to copy old manuscripts and built monumental churches similar to the early Christian past and refused to have classical literature or early Christian writing lost in order to instruct society along Christian lines. Christian aristocracies were enthusiastic about

Charlemagne's leadership in endeavoring to make the Benedictine rule gain in popularity. It established the basis of change from the decaying classical world of the sixth century with what was seen at the time as more of a vision of order and regularity. This was embraced and Benedictine monasteries gained vast estates. While the monks prayed, so did many of the Carolingian upper classes who were taught and gained an understanding of their own sinfulness. Nobles were punished for living lives that were only defined by fighting to gain wealth.

Although the level of social conformity may be found by those who value an individual identity more as indicative of a society that was easily brought under communal prayer, demands were high for mass. The way of thinking had changed and had become more ecclesiastical in all spheres of life. Historians have discussed the civilizing effect of the amalgam of forces, meaning the Christian, Germanic and Roman elements, as a result of closer connections. It became therefore less about glory, the will of one man, or the glory for the past, but a time where secular power constantly brushed up against spiritual power as communities, throughout the empire, were embracing the internal dialogue between improving one's humanity through spiritual work, the practical realities of politics and power, and redefining traditions that seemed to step on the toes of the lords who embraced their spheres of influence but were being curtailed and offended. It provided a higher purpose.

The history of the Romans thus far had been an endless reenactment of the Roman origin story whereby they grappled with new territories, betrayals, defining the values of the times and who played the role of the abandoned twins. Was it the Romans or those who could not withstand the tests of their times? In actuality, Rome had sometimes played the abandoner and one interpretation of the church's need to reclaim old territories could stem from the very guilt and realization of having left these people abandoned and ruled by those who turned on the Roman effort to build a homogenous empire. The conflicting rights of the time did not have the benefit of systems

that emerged in the countries in Europe like Britain, France and Germany that eventually built themselves on more solid foundations of freedom, equality and individual rights — liberal values that were not based on any religious or ethnic unity.

The result wasn't a political system with political freedoms, but a warring group of parties that were often dissatisfied with limits to their expansion, be they through hearts and minds or territory. Justice was served in the eyes of those who upheld the papacy and its protectors at a time when the individual identity was less in vogue given that groups had rights more so than individuals. It simply was not emphasized at the time by the Roman Catholic Church dogma. If the spiritual unity prevailed, the intent of the empire's creators may have set the foundation on stronger ground than glory and will.

Once again, to dispel any idea that the fall of the republic, empire, or the centralization efforts of the Holy Roman Empire during the time that the Byzantine Empire had split off from the failed western empire in the fifth century, led to a dark time is crucial. The conceptualizations of the time of how to govern within the human trappings inherent in conflicts of interests had not yet emerged into valuing the individual over a state's or a religion's interests. Political freedoms could only come when the Holy Roman Empire eventually dismantled given the continual hegemony of conformity and the overriding ideal of spiritual unity. There wasn't room for people to disagree. The system focused on internal matters of its people and hadn't quite reached the conceptual importance of a foundation built on questions about freedoms, justice and rights. The concepts history would grapple with of leaving the matter of religion in a territory that allowed for people to choose how their own personal transformations were conducted, not as a matter of the church or the state, but on their own, were still not dominant.

Chapter 6 Byzantine Empire: East West Schism, Crusades, Turning Points and 1453

Although the Holy Roman Empire experienced a time of organized virtue, forms of justice, divine providence and ambiguous junctures of power over spiritual and civic interests in the eleventh century, the Byzantines were weakening while also expanding into the West. If in the ninth century, the Byzantine Empire had experienced an increase in its strength and pushed back Muslim enemies, then the advancing Seljuk Turks, one of several invading nomadic tribes, threatened their security and prosperity. Advances by the Turks were constant. Depending on the direction of the migrations, the Byzantine Empire was attempting to effectively react to the times. The Ottomans were a threat to Asia Minor and in the Middle East. Mercenary armies began to impede the Byzantines. Although there is little room to elaborate on the importance of the *theme* system within the Byzantine empire, it's a relevant factor to understanding this point in history as decentralization efforts — similar to the ones in the West when kingdoms and smaller states resisted the Roman Empire — were undermining any advances the Byzantines could make in securing their hold on power in the region. One could conceivably think of it as a district.

Since the earlier conquests of Slavs, Muslims, Lombards, and others of Byzantine territories, the Byzantine Empire chose to replace the provincial system that was established during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. In so doing, although constantly evolving between the eleventh and tenth centuries, each *theme* also extended military control based within each defensive zone as if each had its own frontier. Passes were called *kleisourai* and forts were constructed. The attempt to create *themes* would provide the empire more governance over local interactions with border threats, especially Muslim raids, and increase central control.

Yet despite the order it attempted to create, the matter of the

times, the Crusades, would eventually turn much of their effort to dust. Pope Urban II (1088-1099) would lead the way in one of the defining moments of the Crusades when he appealed to the masses and the knights of Latin Rome to help fellow Christians subjected to Muslim rule in the Near East. A Byzantine emperor, Alexios IV Angelos (1203-1204) would be deposed and murdered leading to a key turning point of the decline of the Byzantine Empire and the establishment of a Latin Empire in Constantinople. Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282) would eventually recover Constantinople from the Latin Empire in 1261 to transform Nicaea into a restored Byzantine empire. The Ottoman Empire would extinguish the embers of the Byzantine Empire in May 1453 leaving few standing.

When the Byzantine army was defeated in 1071 by the Seljuk Turks at the Battle of Manzikert, it led to a series of events that would shake the Byzantine Empire. In 1081, Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) seized the throne and that same year the Byzantines were unsuccessful in preventing the Seljuks from establishing in close proximity to Constantinople the Sultanate of Rum. Komnenos had to appeal for help to Pope Urban II. The situation precipitated after that into the beginning of eight crusades including the Crusade of Nikopolis in 1396. A threatened, shifting and changing Byzantine identity would dominate the focus of the Komnenian, Angelid, Laskarid and Palaiologos dynasties. The eight crusades considered to be both defensive wars, given the Muslim conquests of Christian lands and their efforts toward expanding their empire, and Latin holy wars to liberate Christians in the East and free the Holy Lands, happened over the course of the next two hundred years. They are considered to have had an organizational weakness on the part of the Latin West since they relied on composite forces which tore them apart often since they did not have unity on tactics and led to dissent at critical times in key battles. Additionally, they underestimated their opponents.

Simply to provide a little background about the Crusades,

during the seventh century, the Holy Land, along with Syria and Egypt, were conquered by the successors of the Prophet Muhammad, who founded the new faith of Islam in the seventh century. Under Muslim rule, the "People of the Book" were allowed to retain their Jewish or Christian religions through payment of a poll tax not levied on Muslims. Palestine, at the time of Jesus Christ, belonged to the Roman Empire. Eventually, the eastern half would become the Byzantine Empire. Two increasingly inhospitable and hostile conditions caused much suffering among the local Christians. The first was the increasing fighting between factions of Islamic faith in areas where Christians lived. The second was the unfolding results of the Turks conquering Iraq, Armenia, Khurasan, and Persia. The Saljuks establishing a protectorate over the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad. This turned Palestine into a battleground between Saljuk Turks and the Fatimid Islamic forces. Christian pilgrimages were disrupted.

The Byzantine Empire was weak against the Turks and had been defeated by the Saljuks at the Battle of Mantzikert in 1071. The Byzantine Empire lost Syria and most of Asia Minor. Upon the request of the Byzantine emperor, the Pope, in 1095, gave a sermon that called for military action, not based on intolerance toward the Islamic faith, but on preserving the religious value of the Christians and Christian places that were so grievously caught up in the localized conflicts. His appeal led to the People's Crusades with a divine mission to be fulfilled by a disparate group focused on a divine plan, but not necessarily trained or vetted.

The First Crusade (1096-1099) by contrast relied on nobles who recruited troops and non-combatants in the West. As the People's Crusaders, they swore an oath to the Byzantine emperor to restore to the Byzantine Empire all lands they would conquer that had belonged to the empire prior to the Turkish invasions. In the course of their crusades, they took Nicaea, Antioch in Syria in 1098, and served the Turkish relieving army a defeat. They defied their oath however. They gave the city of Antioch to Bohemond of Taranto. By mid-summer 1099, they took Jerusalem. They had secured the Holy Places that had

been inaccessible for pilgrimage back under Christian control. In the Middle Ages, the Christian-controlled territories centered around Antioch, Jerusalem and the county of Tripoli. At the time, they were referred to as Syria, the Holy Land, or Outremer ("the land beyond the sea" in Old French). They secured naval support back in the West and by 1130 the Franks had control over Syria, Palestine and Upper Mesopotamia. Their reliance on the West brought supplies and equipment for future attacks to defend Christian territory in 1101, 1122-24, and 1129.

The Second Crusade (1144-8) started with Pope Eugenius III issued a formal Crusade bull *Quantum praedecessores*, when the Muslim ruler of Mosul took the city of Edessa in Upper Mesopotamia in the winter of 1144. The war effort included the armies of the monarchies of France and Spain. However, the losses were disastrous as the kingdom of Jerusalem attempted to consolidate power with the crusaders, but with an outcome that did not recover any territory for Christendom.

As Muslim Syria and Egypt unified and threatened Latin settlements in Outremer, they repeatedly invaded the Latin kingdom. They also defeated the army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Guy Lusignan, their king was captured and Jerusalem fell in the Fall of 1187. This led to the Third Crusade (1189-1192). The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa sent his army in and he died in the battle. His forces split. This time, the kings of England and France (Richard and Philip II) set out in 1190 to the Holy Land in an attempt to bring victory to their effort. After some territorial gains and victories, they established a truce with Saladin, extending Christian rule over Tyre and Jaffa. The new pope, Innocent III, in 1198 reconfigured their strategy and decided that the crusades needed to be directed at Egypt. By attacking Egypt, it would force them to restore Christian control over Jerusalem and all of the Holy Land.

The proposed target of the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), Egypt, would not be the only city attacked by the Crusaders. In October 1199, the Pope declared the Livonian Crusade against Baltic pagans in

the Baltics and fought that separately on an ongoing mission throughout his reign. He also targeted the heretics of southern France during the Albigensian Crusade in 1208 followed by a 1212 Crusade against Almohads of Andalusia.

Egypt was the chief center of Muslim power. Unfortunately, the realities of the situation did not allow for the Crusaders to maintain their course. Although the zeal Pope Innocent III had instilled into his pleading for a renewal of the crusading effort intended to continue to increase the popularity for liberation of Holy Land, every head of state in Europe that received the plea did not respond in kind. He asked for a commitment by March 1199 with rewards and full pardons for any sins, as well as eternal salvation. The monetary rewards included debt forgiveness. While the kings were dealing with conflicts both internal and external, which lacked the pacificity that the unity of the umbrella of Christianity in the making of the empires may have attempted to impose, security was a priority. How could they afford to take away some of their soldiers for an attempt to secure the far off Holy Lands? Few monarchs committed. Instead, a negotiated fleet from the Doge of Venice and a third of the expected force appeared. The force had little to contribute other than their presence and willingness to assert the claim on the Holy Lands.

As a result, the Venetian fleet had a bit of an advantage in matters. They made a demand. If they would stop at the port of Zadar, an old stronghold currently held by the Hungarians, then they would be willing to continue to Egypt on a mission to secure the Holy Land. After some hemming and hawing, the Crusaders agreed. Despite the papal ban on attacking a Christian city, they laid siege to the Catholic city of Zadar. Zadar surrendered. Since it was rough to travel as a fleet in the winter, they decided to stay at Zadar and occupied it. A plot was brewing in the Angelid dynasty. Alexius' sister Irene and her husband Philip, the king of Germany, would send envoys to the Crusaders at Zadar and ask them to help Alexius regain the throne. In return, they were offered 10,000 men and solved all the financial troubles of the Fourth Crusade with an offer that would be difficult to

refuse. Initially, they took some time to think about it. Divisions formed with some wanting to march to Constantinople with the new marching orders and another insisting they stay on course given their mission to reclaim the Holy Land. Another group preferred to sack the sultan in Egypt who controlled Jerusalem and then advised moving onto the new mission to Constantinople. During the decision making process, some deserted.

Around Easter 1203, the army set off to Corfu. There they met Alexius. Despite the scenario that Alexius presented that there would be an embrace of the liberator, Constantinople fought fiercely. Beyond a few days of assaults, they set the city on fire to avoid the emperor's royal guard. Alexius was crowned. The Crusaders remained to secure the new emperor who had certainly made some enemies in the attempt. In the fighting, the section of the city where the most wealthy and powerful lived was wiped out. Finding that the treasury had been emptied to his surprise, Alexius was not able to follow through on payment offers he made and he was quickly the object of much hate.

Another coup attempt and the realization of the Crusaders that their efforts would go unrewarded sucked them into a huge dilemma. They decided to bring Constantinople under the authority of the papacy. Constantinople would end up under the Crusaders' control. They elected the Count of Flanders as the new emperor who took the name Emperor Baldwin I and created a new empire. Jerusalem and the "True Cross" upon which they crucified Jesus Christ were now distant ambitions that were abandoned. They had been forgotten. The cause had been trumped and power and betrayal had once again as has been seen from even the origin story of the Romans had ultimately won the day and consumed the crusaders, despite the stern reproach of the papacy at the news. The schism between the Orthodox East and the Catholic West became irreversible. The Latin Empire established itself in 1204.

During the Fifth and Sixth Crusade (1213-1229), Pope Honorius III under Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1220-1250),

were eventually forced into unfavorable peace terms with the sultan. In the lead up to the crusade, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II delayed the crusade and the Pope censured his tardiness. Frederick was eventually excommunicated by Honorius' successor, Pope Gregory IX for falling ill at the expected start date to embark on the crusade. Frederick II led a crusade to Jerusalem in 1228 and both the Knights Templars and the Knights of St. John refused to serve under Frederick in the crusade. Without their support, he seized Jaffa and entered into a treaty with Sultan Malek Kamel of Egypt that was to expire in 1244. Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth came under Christian control, but his claim of Jerusalem was not consecrated by any of the churches in Jerusalem.

In 1244, they lost the Holy City again after the Battle of Gaza when they were deserted by their ally from Damascus and were heavily defeated by the Egyptian general and future sultan of Egypt Baybars. When Frederick returned to the West, after some skirmishes and diplomatic wars with the Pope, they negotiated the Peace of San Germano between the two of them. However, the struggles continued over the years. Attempts continued to recover the Holy Lands in the thirteenth century. Given that the continual build up of an impasse of emirates (principalities) by the approaching Turks to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea grew out of the holy wars against the Byzantine Empire, the focus of the fourteenth century for the Byzantines turned toward fighting the Ottoman empire and the onslaughts from Seljuk Turks. The rest of the crusades until 1270, initiated at the fall of Jerusalem, met with fierce battles with Turkish slave warriors from the Seljuks, thousands of Crusaders were captured and killed, Mongol hordes, and the Mamluks fierce fighting spurred by Baybars stopped the Latin attempts and captured and destroyed their ports and eastern lands.

The establishment of the Latin Empire in 1204 ended the Fourth Crusade and eventually in 1261, Constantinople was recaptured. Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282) plotted to take Constantinople and negotiated with Mongols,

Bulgarians, and the Selchukids. The Genoese also signed a treaty at Nymphaeum in March 1261 to supply warships to be certain he had the appropriate naval power. Although the Genoese assistance was good tactically, it would not be necessary since Michael's troops independently took Constantinople in the spring of 1261 under his brother John and caesar Alexius Strategopoulus.

Yet where did the Byzantine Empire go during that fifty-seven year span after it had been removed by force from Constantinople? The Byzantine Emperor Theodore I. Laskaris established a smaller version of the Byzantine empire and called it the empire of Nicaea. It was east of Constantinople. The Patriarch crowned him in 1208. The next emperor was John III Doukas Vatatzes and he expanded the Nicaean Empire after fighting the Latins in Greece, Greeks in Epirus, and Bulgarians. He conquered the Kingdom of Thessalonica. What continued from 1204 through the Laskaris dynasty that lasted from 1254 until the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos was an identity shift that centered on the exile that had been imposed on the Byzantines. Although Constantinople itself was not the embodiment or definition of the Byzantines, it did however turn what was at its center its idea of itself toward uncertainty.

The people grappled with their *Romanness*. They had a narrower sense of themselves as their emperors, who were once universal monarchs, were now by all appearance local kings. No longer were the Byzantines the tamers of the destructive warriors who were chipping away at their empire. Instead, their policies had failed and with it the idea of their *Romanness*. They began to call themselves 'Hellenes.' Although history tells that the earlier Byzantines did not use this term, since it implied 'pagan,' it was helpful in redefining themselves and embracing a separate identity from the Latins that had brought them to calamity in 1204. They were no longer willing to take the risk of living by a universal ideal, but instead they embraced their own identity as 'Greeks' and their ethnicity. This newly embraced identity would have difficulty shifting even when the empire reclaimed Constantinople in 1261 under Michael VIII

Palaiologos as a more provincial ethnically-centered identity held on strong and was further reaffirmed by the Hellenes as the frontier continued to get assaulted by the various groups of Turks and their autonomous emirs.

It didn't help that Palaiologos also ended up alienating the provinces and leaving them unsafe from attacks. He attempted to reunify the churches and wrote to the Latin papacy in an attempt to show compromise on official issues that separated the two churches and to come to terms. He accepted the *filioque* clause and acknowledged the Church of Rome's authority over the universality of the church, along with the acceptance of the practice of using unleavened bread in communion. The Byzantine delegation arrived in Lyons France in the summer of 1274. After the papal acceptance and masses to celebrate that included the *filioque* during the creed, the communion with Rome was complete.

The Hellenes may not have found their emperor's actions as fulfilling as the emperor did. They had grown to distaste the Latins and had in local practices displayed their animosity for material objects and practices that smacked of Latin origin. A huge rift developed between those who would end up being called traitors for supporting the imperial policy and those who remained fervently attached to their identity that was developed in exile. Punishments by the imperial leader to those who opposed followed. This did not please Rome. His concessions to the West didn't ring true to the Hellenes. His actions after his policy shift and his meeting with Rome without attempting to garner the support of the Hellenes threatened to internally destroy the very empire he hoped to resuscitate. Creating a military campaign to divert the wrath of Rome, he managed to delay the consequences to his actions. Decline followed through the 1290s. Most of Asia Minor was lost by the early fourteenth century. The Ottoman Turks by establishing themselves near Bosphoros by the mid-fourteenth century were no longer a distant threat, but a reality that would not be impressed by the Byzantine imperial identity that would be left questioning itself and its very existence.

As the Byzantine Empire struggled to avoid an uncensored death, Turkish consolidation encircled the Byzantines like quicksand. The last effort of the Christian West was the Crusade of Nikopolis in 1396 at the time of the Great Schism (1378-1417). It was the first encounter between Ottomans and western troops. The joint French-Hungarian crusading army was defeated at the fortress on the south shore of the Danube. Ottoman sultan Bayezid I ended up with supreme power despite Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund's effort. It became no longer realistic to liberate the Holy Land. And the Ottoman sultan, now named the Thunderbolt, would go on to take Constantinople in 1453.

Chapter 7 Holy Roman Empire from the Crusades until 1806

After the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1220-1250), the High Middle Ages saw a rise of struggles between the Holy Roman Empire and secular monarchies. Claims regarding universal authority over the church and state were not welcomed by many monarchs. Claims by monarchs that all subjects which included clergy members were under their authority were not welcomed by the clergy and the pope. The competing interests for authority were a constant source of tension. Even worse, they led to sovereignty issues. Soon there were distinctions being officially designed between spiritual authority over temporal authority. The growth of secular monarchies challenged the power of the papacy successfully.

After Frederick the II's successor and son Conrad IV of Germany died in 1254, the Great Interregnum became official policy until the Habsburg dynasty (1273-1740) began when Count Rudolph I (1273-1291) was crowned. During the Great Interregnum, there were no emperors, despite a number of claims to the throne. The cause of the Great Interregnum was that although there were dominant princes that could succeed to the throne, in particular William of Holland, he did not pursue the ecclesiastic empire duties. The growing independence of the nobility took precedence to attaining an emperor and Pope Alexander IV forbade the election of anyone from the Hohenstaufen dynasty, which had ruled from 1138 to 1208 and also from 1212 to 1254. None of the princes moved to choose a single emperor as their growing independence was in their own interest. This twenty-three year period of decentralization led to praise of Rudolph I of Hapsburg for restoring order. Emperors were no longer simply selected by the Pope and the council had no interest in replacing Emperor Conrad IV given the realities of the times in an environment of anti-kingships and split elections.

The times had changed and the identity of the emperor and the scrutiny and procedure in selecting one required those who claimed the throne to establish their right to lead. Notable of the Habsburg dynasty was that they would attempt in many actions to lend legitimacy to their contested authority. Despite the efforts Rudolf I made, the receding ability of the emperors to restore order over dynastic instability in the monarchies of the Middle Ages meant that unity continued to slip just out of reach of any effort. Imperial power was difficult to assert. Rudolf I was crowned in Aachen in October 1273 and recognized by Pope Gregory X in September 1274 during the Council of Lyons with the condition that he would renounce all imperial rights to Rome and in Italy and lead a crusade. The Holy Roman Empire at the time then consisted of present-day eastern France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Poland and Austria and areas of Czech Republic. The last to be crowned in Rome was Frederick III (1415-93).

Successive emperors of the Habsburg dynasty and the Luxembourg dynasty (1308-1437), like Charles IV of Luxemburg, are remembered in history as attempting to bring a measure of stability. The Wittelsbach dynasty also held dominion over the Holy Roman Empire in the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. All three dynasties, all interrupting each other throughout their combine rule, were faced with resistance to the domination of the church as well as forces that wanted to reinvigorate the conformity.

By 1356, the papal role in elections was ended by Emperor Charles IV. One of the key political realities of the time relevant to our exploration of the ever-changing *Romanness* of Roman history is that Spain gained supremacy over Italy after the Battle of Pavia in 1525. The Peace of Barcelona was signed by the Pope and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who also ruled the Spanish Empire, in 1529. Pope Clement VII had supported France, English and Venetian and Florentine states, and the Milanese against the Habsburg emperor during the War of the League of Cognac. In 1527, Charles' army had mutinied and sacked Rome, leaving Charles to restore a peaceful papal

alliance.

The Italian Wars between 1494-1559 included France invading Italy in 1524 with 40,000 troops and the noted disastrous advances on the Spanish garrison at Pavia. In the Treaty of Madrid of 1526, the French king ceded France's Italian territory, Artois, Flanders, and Burgundy to the Holy Roman Emperor. Since it was not ratified, Francis I claimed that he signed it under duress. He had inherited from his father Philip the Fair in 1506 Castile, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Navarre, parts of Burgundy, the Netherlands and the Habsburg lands in Germany. He would add the Inca and Aztec empires and the dutchy of Milan to their territories. During his time the motto *Plus Ultra* referred to how his empire stretched beyond the ancient Roman Empire's boundaries. Yet history claims that while the French and the Holy Roman Empire were consumed in their religious wars over the course of sixty years, the Spanish monarchs became the increasingly more reliable protectors of the Papal State and Roman Catholicism.

In 1517, Martin Luther, the German theologian challenged the established Catholic hierarchies and opened up the debate only to be excommunicated by the Pope four years later. In the process, he started the Protestant Reformation. By 1555, the Peace of Augsburg was agreed to by the Holy Roman Emperor. It stipulated that each German prince would be left to impose the faith of his choice within his territories. In the mid-sixteenth century the Holy Roman Empire split into a German half and Spain. The new emperor Ferdinand I (1503-64) was now the head of a federation of German principalities. As the Renaissance fascinated itself with antiquity back in Rome and bloomed out of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries into a complex understanding of Rome in the Middle Ages between the ancient world and the existing age, the Holy Roman Empire with its center of power no longer in Rome grew. Now it gained and lost territory in Italy, Bohemia, Hungary and the Netherlands.

In the two hundred fifty years leading up to the defeat of the Habsburg monarch Francis I in December 1805 at the hands of

Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, the 30 Day War led to a power struggle for control between Catholics and Protestants, the Treaty of Westphalia led to the Holy Roman Emperor recognizing the religious and political sovereignty of the German states, and Prussia rose as a rival for power. In the early 1500s, the empire included Austria, Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, parts of Italy and the Burgundian Netherlands. The title was losing any force given the power of the local princes and dukes and although the King of Germany as the Holy Roman Emperor did have political influence, it was fast becoming a shadow of its former self.

Years of religious tension allowed for the coexistence of people who were establishing their own religious identities after 1555 introducing less communal and more self-identity models to a way of life. The ruling aristocracies that had previously demanded a conformity and unity through faith was still dominated by the end of the Holy Roman Empire by customs, yet those customs were changing with the increase of religions. Their antiquity may have played a large role in their development. However, right when they had to deal with pressing divisions that brought severe implications to the institutions that had for so long been seen as the very institution that the Franks needed to protect, their destiny to maintain order over vast territories was not acceptable. Identities and interests shifted.

Even when Emperor Rudolf II in 1606 reluctantly agreed that a sultan was the heir to the old Byzantine imperial title, there were still lines being drawn in the land. This in part was a Roman tradition that may have come unravelled from the fabric that bound the Romans together throughout their history given more time, yet seemed to be securely tied into a supremacy of ruling over any and all others of any faith or background. It would prove to be an unspoken truth to the identity that would require even the Hellenes to regroup and rethink what it was that the Byzantine identity had bestowed on them by uniting them through religion, but one closely associated with patriarchal battles and holy wars that determined victory and how history would remember them.

The Holy Roman Empire's persistent older forms of unification and dispossession constrained and resisted growing needs of sovereignty. Yet despite the years of scholarship that have focused on the latter medieval emperors failing to establish greater central authority, this is not the case. In understanding the changing nature of the times, it is crucial to once again recognize how decentralization itself, the desire and need for sovereignty seemed to be more of a natural process historically that was directly affecting the history of the Holy Roman Empire. Its existence, or frankly its survival, mattered less than the forces of the times. These forces revealed that although self-described and driven by a divine will of God at the mercy of being the protector of the papacy as it consumed the empire, it differed greatly from the mindsets that were growing at the time. It certainly doesn't invalidate the importance of the contributions of the Holy Roman Empire to history. What it showed was that again, just as before, the Roman concept could not simply be imposed and that even given the idea of a more secure and stable, society never removed the political fighting that harassed it throughout its history. There was something still unsatisfied in its formulation. The sheer level of dynastic ambitions that drove aristocrats alike could not be coiled like a hose and put away simply because the empire had larger and greater interests.

By the same token, the identity with an empire without a consistent capital and a generally accepted ideal that all levels of society were subscribed to upholding peace, morality and justice through symbolic acts generally ties back to the foundation upon which the empire had been built. Spiritual unity and a higher purpose albeit in constant conflict with the developing political realities of the times gave it its central tenets. The complex web of loyalties harkened back to the antiquities. The individual principalities, monarchs, elites and princes that did eventually rebel the need for an emperor for a while identified with the imperial identity. The empire did provide legal protections when necessary and reinforced the deeply conservative social identity even while local identities flourished. While the mainstream of society may have embraced the

uniformity and conformity of thought in terms of spirituality, they had not identified with the need for uniformity of rights and the results showed.

As the empire declined, the existence of an Interregnum suggests that the nobility had been successful in shaping the perception of the emperor no longer as a needed protector, as it had once been so desperately pursued for by the papacy. Instead, soon they were seen as anti-royal and despite how the future unfolded for monarchies and how states grew, the dominant concerns were obviated, at least in fits and spurts. It led away from a morality that may have dominated the thinking of Romans toward a need for sovereignty, despite the implied benefits of an empire. A national unity was developing that appeared to question the medieval foundation of spiritual unity and protection accompanied by perpetual conquest.

It was considered to be cosmopolitan and broad. Yet, it's important to consider that it may have been a different type of cosmopolitan than we consider in the modern conceptualization in that the moralistic and conservative nature of the social fabric did not embrace a cosmopolitanism that would include those that the Romans judged as heretical or the other. It casts doubt on the portrayal of the Holy Roman Empire's cosmopolitan style and begs for a possible redefinition of the inclusiveness that came with a superiority, not a 'live and let live' attitude. This was yet an underdeveloped virtue among the many that they held central to their models of behavior.

Chivalry was a mainstay of society. In the course of their history, the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy would fight over the universalism of Rome and in failing to impose their perpetual control on Europe and everywhere they set out to conquer, they managed to in the framework of history appear to idealize certain aspects of their society. What comes to mind is namely their cavalry, even if they had shaped social and moral virtues in general. However, their means of establishing patriarchal dominance set something in motion for posterity. The Holy Roman Empire would be remembered as

embracing its conservatism and militarism more than appreciating how these imposed limits led to many of the reasons they became the less attractive alternative as they experienced decline. By the time of the rise of feudal lords that no longer treated or perceived the king as speaking god's word and became willing to shed the unlimited power and authority of the emperor, their form of chivalry seemed to also be a rejection of the royals. How so? Based on the moral models of behavior, not all royalty displayed their commitment and moral obligations to defend and protect their subjects and were often therefore not worth emulating to lords who did conduct themselves in a chivalrous manner.

Piety had framed the goals of a chivalrous life as 'fame in this world, and salvation in the next.' Although the Church in association with the Crusades may have advanced the purpose of chivalry, the image of the spiritually guided knight as the only path toward spiritual salvation may not have withstood the tests of time for good reason. Those who portrayed themselves as chivalrous knights would become politically irrelevant as news of the Crusades spread and included that the very heart of the mission had not been achieved. With so much emphasis on attaining honor through the traditional sense of the word chivalry, other forms of being considered honorable would surely be considered a viable alternative. Historical records reveal that a number of chivalric orders and officially sanctioned events were seized as a form of political influence. The Crusades led to the establishment of the Knights Templar, The Hospitallers of Saint John and the Teutonic Order. They for all intents and purposes gained a religious status in their fights against the infidel, committing to a very strict code of conduct.

During the age of chivalry, princes facing the same threats as the Church did, relied on chivalrous knights to protect them. To uphold their honor and fortune, chivalrous knights considered that they were entitled to private warfare that they deemed necessary. This created an understandable tension among medieval monarchs and any of the ruling elite who needed to protect their authority and also

maintain a peace within their realms. Devoid often of the same spiritual aspect that the papal crusades demanded in displays and codes of chivalry from its knights, monarchs retained more secular knights who did not need to abstain from sex and could seek to live less like monks and more like proud knights. Many monarchs limited or did not tolerate the right of knights to conduct private wars in their employ. They valued prowess, glory, courage and religious virtues of prudence and fortitude and lived to achieve these virtues in war.

Despite how wars tore them apart throughout history, their chivalrous identity depended on the internal-outsider identity in order to justify their causes of action and their full vigor in taking the courses necessary to uphold their honor as soldiers of fortune as they attached their very worth to their displays of chivalry. As one can imagine given that groups were the subjects of their Holy Roman Empire frame of mind, people were not viewed, rather they were part of classes as part of a single civilization. One might wonder how long before the knightly code of behavior actually became synonymous with behaving "like a gentleman." Etymological studies reveal that *gentilis homo* or gentleman in the beginning was properly applied only to a descendant of the gentile conquerors of the Roman Empire. This again reinforces the identity of internal-outsider that the Holy Roman Empire created and one that defined the relationship between victors and potentially those who were conquered who had to deal with these gentlemen. *Gentiles* applied as a designation for all barbarians under Roman jurisdiction.

It is telling what the Hellenes experienced at the time of their exile in the Byzantine Empire and it can help inform our consideration of the Holy Roman Empire. Those who had identified strongly with their imperial culture were suddenly aware of how firmly their identity had been shaped by Constantinople, with a conservatism, militarism and absolutism that was inextricably connected to Constantinople. In some way, their identity speaks volumes about the identity that the Holy Roman Empire was leaving its citizens within the years leading up to its wind up. They were left struggling to find a

cultural and existential identity for themselves separate from the conservatism, militarism and absolutism. Above all, they were coming to terms with an identity as a protector of a papacy that considered itself the authority of a universal ideal. How would it have felt to see so many question the very sentiment and reason of building such a centralized concept for all lives even if they were not encouraged to do soul searching or question the authorities?

The collective identity was emphasized, and yet it was only through conflicts surrounding land, power, authority, and sovereignty that the collective experience could begin to tear apart. The bubble was bursting. They could not be sheltered by having a higher purpose from the realities that catapulted them away from their ideals into questioning the validity of their higher purpose. This is especially true with the resistance that now was no longer solved by military intervention, but a change in the political processes and a diminishing need for the emperor. It's interesting to consider that if the Holy Roman Empire had been approached by other faiths to also protect them whether an inter-faith solution may have rooted itself before the empire fell apart.

Despite its variety of traditions, there was still the imperial notion that was a deep part of the character and identity of those in the Holy Roman Empire that truly believed in the superiority of their civilizing missions. That imperial notion left many questioning the very nature of the identity that they built on these imperialistic policies and social integrations. The models of imperial behavior, like Constantine, that included domination unlike other empires that formed along the way, suited them and other empires that enveloped Italy under their wing, even as the Holy Roman Empire remained committed to protecting the interests of the papacy.

Conclusion

Talk to some Americans and they will say that they are as American as mom's apple pie, guns and god. Yet, no matter how true that simple idea of what American is to them, it would be an extreme oversimplification given the different cultures that make America home. Rome at different times of its history has been described as cosmopolitan. But it wasn't the type of cosmopolitan that we think of today. Those who made Rome home may not have come there freely and were often the conquered. Although they were accepted and encouraged to continue their traditions, they were not the ruling class of Romans until social mobility brought them through the ranks to help Roman expansion efforts. Romans may have feared them, since they might lose their very soul if foreigners influenced them.

Their attitude suggests xenophobia and a superior nature to inferior foreigners. Whether driven by the imperial culture they lived in, they felt entitled to rule over people regarded as inferior in many ways. Their faith in the stability of their Holy Roman Empire depended on the constant pursuit of preserving the empire yet as kings protected their spheres of influence and power, the imperial identity faded away and the stability of the monarchy prevailed over time. Yet, if we consider how important icons were to the Byzantines and how religious art became a point of contention between rulers, we can connect with the freedom to interpret their religious figures in depictions that were considered by other religions as forbidden. Islam and Jewish faiths did not allow physical representations of god and saintly figures. Many of the larger scale icons were publically displayed in churches, monasteries, palaces and smaller icons in wealthier homes.

The challenges to icons that led to iconoclasm embraced by certain emperors and enforced by the smashing and destruction of icons were not well received by many in the Roman public including monks. Even if iconoclasm within Christianity was considered a tool

to pacify the various and diverse cultural groups within the Byzantine empire, within the Holy Roman empire, icons were mostly embraced, although there were very violent episodes of iconoclasm also that were however not initiated by the rulers themselves. The tradition of icon making has its origins in early non-Christian Roman tradition of panel painting and using religious subjects had through icon making broke sharply from traditions. However, for the most part it was a type of high art and represented elite views and the common people likely were swept up in the fervor or indifferent. Since many items, both of religious, architectural or cultural significance represented the power of the ruling class, there was likely very little in the way of opportunities for public comment.

As mentioned earlier, the world of the West as it developed over time entertained conflicting loyalties and conflicting needs. Western Romans had generally accepted the tradition of icons, holy relics and art with religious connotations. One might even look to the purely secular she-wolf from Rome's origin story and how it became a recognizable symbol in Rome and its use as the symbol of papal justice and Rome itself. The she-wolf is depicted famously in "The Capitoline Wolf" and was an iconographic motif at the time, despite it referring to a pre-Christian Rome. The intention is still the same in appreciating the cultural significance of icons, since it represented attachments to beliefs and rituals and stories that were unique aspects of Roman development in shaping their shifting identity. *Romanness*, despite the conflicting political ambitions that marked the time was enveloped by the pursuit of ascendancy as represented by the she-wolf origin and continued in the Christian icons in continuing on the steep path to virtue. This steep path would require a personal dedication to triumph, power and majesty despite how loyalty and honor could be tested by the forces and conflicts of the time. Developing their providential right to ascend meant for some embracing the very thing in ancient Rome that the Greek historian Polybius spoke of: a change for the better.

While their stereotypical symbolic notions of *Romanness* could include

gladiators, imperialism and 'when in Rome, do as the Romans,' the distinctive qualities we have explored in the numerous eras of the empires they built show a deeper identity. It was one that shifted and was often not only formed by the authority of the rulers, the dominant religious institutions and the aristocracy. It was also through the stories that were built on antiquity that let them develop and unravel unquestionable characteristics that they identified with being virtuously, honorably, and powerfully Roman on a steep path struggling with ideals and virtues where in battles against tyranny, infighting and their outsiders, they found sometimes they were their own worst enemies.

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